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ABSTRACT

This case study investigated the manner in which junior kindergarten children learn to adapt to the role of student. Participant observation in a junior kindergarten class during the first 3 weeks of school was used to probe 22 children's perceptions of their first experiences as students. Particular attention was given to the way in which children reacted to, described, understood, and interpreted the events they encountered. The experiences and sequential development of one child are examined in detail. The pedagogical significance of the study arises from the assumption that young children's acclimatization to the student role may have profound effects on the way they approach subsequent school and life experiences. Children's reactions to early school experiences have important implications for the focus of educational programs. Data analyzed on recurring patterns of behavior reveal that students may not behave appropriately during prescribed routines because they possess insufficient procedural information, are exploring rule limits, or are delaying participation until they feel more competent in performing the routine. (RJC)

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"WHAT'S HAPPENING?": A STUDY OF CHILDREN'S EARLIEST EXPERIENCES IN JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

by

KATHLEEN MARGARET AMUNDS

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

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ABSTRACT

This case study investigates the manner in which junior kindergarten children learn to adapt to the role of student. Participant observation in one junior kindergarten class during the first 3 weeks of school is used to probe the children's perceptions of their first experiences as students. Particular attention is given to how children react to, describe, understand, and interpret the events and incidents that they encounter. The experiences and sequential development of one child are examined in detail.

The pedagogical significance of this study arises from the assumption that young children's acclimatization to the student role may have profound effects on the way they approach their subsequent school and life experiences. Thus, children's reactions to early school experiences have important implications for the focus of educational programs.

Data, analysed on recurring patterns of behavior, reveal that when students do not behave appropriately during prescribed routines, it may be because they possess insufficient procedural information, because they are exploring rule limits, or because they are delaying participation until they feel more competent in performing the routine.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There seems to be little doubt that children of the 1980s in most developed countries are experiencing their childhood in a manner that is appreciably different from their forefathers. Katz (1987) predicts that "if present trends in family life continue into the next decade most children under the age of five will spend substantial proportions of their early years in various types of early childhood programs" (p. 3). These programs include the formal settings of nursery school and kindergarten. Expanding the practice of formally educating very young children, considered by Elkind (1986) to be an experiment, must be carefully scrutinized because:

> during the critical early years, young children form lifelong attitudes towards themselves and others as well as towards their capacity for initiative and learning. If we bungle this experiment we may emotionally and educationally disable a significant proportion of future generations. (p. 3)

One aspect of early childhood education that has not received adequate scrutiny by researchers is the initial stages in the process of first becoming a student. Klein, Kantor, and Fernie (1988) note that "researchers know surprisingly little about the process of becoming a

student, though many teachers know quite a lot about it" (p. 32). While academic achievement continues to be examined in minute detail, scant attention has been given to how children themselves perceive their daily lives in the new context of a classroom. Similarly, Corsaro (1988) advises that "theories of children's learning, development, and socialization must go beyond the prediction and explanation of outcomes. We must...grasp the life-worlds of children" (p. 24). Although it may be difficult to gauge what goes through the minds of young children when they first enter kindergarten or nursery school, their perception of these initial experiences may, nevertheless, have a profound and long-lasting effect on their remaining school years. Based on the assumption that school experiences in early childhood may have long-lasting negative and positive effects on students (Elkind; Garnica, 1981), it seems reasonable to assume that the study of classroom interaction will provide valuable insights into the nature of beginning students' acclimatization to the world of school.

The purpose of this study is to examine the behavior of one class of junior kindergarten students during the initial or settling-in stage of the school term. This study investigates the manner in which junior kindergartners react to, describe, understand, and interpret some of the events and incidents that may affect

their adaptation to the school environment. Further, this study examines the reality of first becoming a student, as seen from the novice students' point of view.

Rationale

Becoming a junior kindergarten student for the first time involves considerably more than the academics of learning to color, cut, paste, and paint. To a significant degree, becoming a student entails developing social competence in classroom interaction. For the purposes of this study, classroom interaction is defined as "a social activity comprised of [sic] the verbal and nonverbal behavior which students and teachers manifest and interpret in face-to-face encounters" (Shultz & Florio, 1979, facing page). Social competence is broadly defined as the ability to behave appropriately in the school environment (Erickson & Shultz, 1981; Forgas, 1981; Garnica, 1981; Goodnow, 1981; Jackson, 1987). Except in the context of the classroom that was observed, my study does not address the issue of what is considered to be appropriate behavior.

Some aspects of the phenomenon of first becoming a student have been addressed by researchers. For example, Green and Harker (1982) compared the way in which two teachers taught songs to kindergartners and determined that different methods of teaching may prepare students in different ways to become members of the classroom society.

Shultz and Florio (1979) examined the ways in which one preschool teacher signalled to students that something new was about to happen. They found that acquiring social competence constitutes a major part of what children need to learn in order to be considered competent students. This finding was similar to LeCompte and Stewart's (1979) who interviewed kindergarten students and teachers in order to determine how children learned to become students.

Indeed, some practitioners argue that the demonstration of social competence by preschool children is the only legitimate criterion for evaluating students' growth and development at this age. Without addressing that argument, it can be fairly assumed that social development <u>does</u> occur in the classroom and that students <u>are</u> judged on this behavior. In a study of the communicative behavior patterns of kindergartners who have "very low standing in the social dominance hierarchy of the group" (p. 230), Garnica (1981) notes that the experiences of these children "may well have an impact on the individual's social interaction for life" (p. 230). Fischer, Hand, Watson, VanParys, and Tucker (1984) propose that developing social competence is a necessary and important aspect of social life, for in a significant sense "the concrete social categories developed during the childhood years...lay the foundation for the more

sophisticated understandings that eventually make the adult a fully participating member of society" (p. 31). If the manner in which social competence is acquired affects a child's life significantly, then it is important that educators broaden their knowledge of this process. The findings in this study are expected to contribute to this knowledge.

Although Klein et al. (1988) note in a literature review that some researchers maintain that it is not possible to gather meaningful information from preschool children, there is evidence that preschoolers are capable of demonstrating verbally and nonverbally their understanding of school procedures and routines. For instance, Klein et al. collected data from kindergartners indicating that children's notions of the purpose of various class routines may differ significantly from the teachers' notions of the purpose of routines. Corsaro (1981) used particpant observation to investigate the nature of peer friendships in a nursery school, and Willes (1981) studied the development of children's language in a nursery school. Reifel (1988) asked 3-year-olds what they did at school and then compared their answers with teachers' descriptions of what happened in school.

While teachers and researchers may not agree with students' interpretations of events and incidents, practitioners can benefit from the examination of the

reality of school experiences as reported by the students, for these perceptions often represent what really goes on in the school environment. From her perspective as a nursery school teacher and researcher, Paley (1986) states that "the first order of reality in the classroom is the students' point of view" (p. 122). The case for students' interpretations of processes is forcefully presented by Hammersley and Woods (1984), who state that:

> there can be little doubt that pupils' own interpretations of school processes represent a crucial link in the educational chain. Unless we understand how pupils respond to different forms of pedagogy in school organizations and why they respond in the ways that they do, our efforts to increase effectiveness, or to change the impact of schooling will stand little chance of success. (p. 3)

Here, Hammersley and Woods are considering older students' reactions to shool processes. However, some researchers are beginning to acknowledge that very young children's interpretations of school processes are useful guides for assessing pedagogical effectiveness. As Genishi (1979) succinctly states, "the teacher of young children cannot teach successfully, nor can the researcher investigate fully, unless both consider what children themselves experience and think" (p. 249). Thus, careful observation

and analysis of verbal and nonverbal messages originating from students' participation in and interpretations of school events will expand educators' and researchers' knowledge of how preschoolers adapt to the role of student. Because determining the process whereby preschoolers learn to become students is contingent upon when and how the study occurs, method is addressed briefly here and is discussed in detail in chapter 2. This study is expected to contribute knowledge to the methodology of participant observation in preschool settings.

An examination of how preschool children first learn to become socially competent students requires the investigation of classroom interaction. Examining classroom interaction at the beginning of the school term provides a perspective on children's socialization that is rarely possible later in the year because it is during "the initial encounters that the negotiation of social parameters in the classroom setting is exposed to view in a way that they are not in later lessons" (Ball, 1984, p. 109). Because first-time students have yet to learn what constitutes the new context for interaction, the process of developing social competence can be studied as it unfolds, since both students and teachers are establishing roles and responsibilities. Nevertheless, Ball (1984), Delamont (1983), and Stubbs (1976) note that relatively little research using ethnographic methods has been

conducted on the beginning weeks of a school term.

Despite this importance, research tends not to be undertaken during initial encounters for several reasons. First, the time frame (which is usually the first weeks in September) often does not suit researchers. Additionally, researchers must stay in the field long enough to uncover patterns of development. As Paley (1986) found when she studied preschool children, "patterns of thought and speech need much time to be revealed" (p.122). Second, and perhaps more important, teachers tend not to accept researchers into the classroom at the outset of the term because the presence of outsiders is presumed to have an adverse effect on the settling-in of teachers and students.

Although gaining access at the beginning of a term may prove difficult, some researchers have been successful. For example, Ball (1984), Beynon (1984), and Edwards and Furlong (1978) were able to study classroom interaction at the senior elementary and secondary level. The data for all of these studies were collected through participant observation and interviews. Edwards and Furlong found that in order to follow what their new teachers were talking about, students already had to know how to listen properly. Ball and Beynon examined how students tested the limits of teachers' acceptance of inappropriate behavior.

At the preschool level, Florio (1978) observed kindergarten worktime activities and studied aspects of interactional competence acquired by students as they learned to become students. Shultz (1979) observed the interaction of one 5-year-old with the teacher and three other students in order to determine what a child needs to know to make sense of what goes on in the classroom and also to determine what a teacher needs to know to make sense of a student's actions. Additional studies include 5-year-old recall and description of class activities (Fivush, 1984), the development of discourse in a nursery school (Willes, 1981), the investigation of peer friendships in nursery school (Corsaro, 1981), and the development of social competence in a nursery school (Jackson, 1987).

Of the preschool research cited above, only Jackson, Corsaro, and Willes sought interpretations of interactional events directly from the students. These researchers report collecting valuable data from preschool children's personal observations of classroom events. In some studies where the purpose of the investigation was to understand preschool children's behavior (but not at the beginning of the term), some researchers elected not to use, or were unable to solicit, data originating from the children's perception of events. For example, King (1978) relied on inferred meaning from overt behavior such as

laughing or crying because he found it too difficult to understand the subjective meanings of very young children. He concluded that "interviewing a 5-year-old is a difficult task" (p.8), since children seem to be almost incapable of reflecting on their own actions. Similarly, when studying nursery school and playground activities, Sylva, Roy, and Painter (1980) interpreted actions solely on observed behavior and did not attempt to judge students' affective states because they deemed that it was "difficult to measure" (p. 225).

However, because preschoolers do have feelings and thoughts, sensitive educators also will consider affective development. A literature review of cognitive and affective interaction (Withall & Lewis, 1971) notes that findings on social interaction have recognized that emotions as well as overt actions are involved in the socialization process. Similarly, Bretherton, Fritz, Zahn-Waxler, and Ridgeway (1986) stated that the subject of feelings "deserves far more attention than it has hitherto been accorded" (p. 545), while Clift and Waxman (1985) maintain that student affect continues to be under-researched. Recent attempts to discover if preschoolers can describe their emotions include Bretherton et al., who found that children as young as 3 years can talk about and explain their emotional states and Freimuth (1982), who used pictures of happy and sad

faces to elicit responses from preschoolers.

While recognizing that it is not easy to interpret accurately preschoolers verbal and nonverbal behavior, some research, as noted previously, indicates that young children are capable of interpreting school processes (Corsaro, 1981; Jackson, 1987; Klein et al., 1988; Paley, 1986; Willes, 1981). Because young children are able to articulate their understanding of school processes, they constitute an important source of data. Davies (1982) notes that young children are "generally not asked to make an account of the social world as they perceive it" (p.1), even though they are "more perceptive and more complex than we generally give them credit for" (p. 165). Interestingly, Piaget's (1952) view of young children's extreme egocentricity has been questioned by numerous researchers (Arnold, 1979; Bokus & Shugar, 1979; Donaldson, 1978; Fischer et al., 1984; Tizard & Hughs, 1987), all of whom contend that very young children are capable of understanding and describing experiences that are external to themselves. The ability of young children to provide useful data through their own descriptions of events has further been confirmed by recent studies. For example, using second grade students as a data source, Hawes (1985), was able through interviews to elicit responses related to how the students reacted to and described social control devices. Cook-Gumperz (1981)

found that "small children aged three to five have knowledge of the social operation of conversations" (p. 49) and are relatively skilled as communicators. Further evidence supporting the contention that young children are reliable data sources comes from Corsaro (1981) who found that nursery school children could successfully articulate their rationale for peer friendships, and Bokus and Shugar (1979) who found that children as young as 3 years can ascribe meaning to and discuss picture scenes.

A literature review shows that researchers have studied numerous aspects of preschoolers' lives while they are in school. Nevertheless, a study that charts the preschoolers' sequential social development in the first weeks of school and that also relies heavily on students as a data source has yet to come to my attention.

Summary

When young children first enter school they must, somehow, make sense of the relatively new routines and procedures that confront them. The kinds of experiences they encounter while learning what behavior is considered appropriate may have far-reaching effects on their social development and their attitude towards school. Assuming that educators want to make this experience positive in all respects, it is useful to pay close attention to how young children react to and perceive the school environment during their first weeks of exposure to that

environment.

Passive observation of preschoolers as they interact in the classroom exposes only a portion of what these children are experiencing. A more complete picture evolves when their own interpretations of events and incidents are also considered. This kind of data may enable teachers to reflect in different ways about the children whose performance they are expected to assess.

Study Overview

The research strategy of this case study is presented in chapter 2. The discussion of site selection, establishing rapport, and data collection describes participant observation and the interview techniques used to elicit data. The manner in which the initial data and the setting steered the focus of the study towards a detailed examination of a limited number of students is addressed, followed by an examination of researcher effect. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the data were analysed. An account of the general characteristics of the classroom environment that was studied is presented in chapter 3. A description of the major routines (circle, tidying, line-up, snack time, and free activities) with which junior kindergartners must become familiar includes some preliminary data analysis supplemented with examples of student behavior. In chapter 4, further data analysis charts the development of

social competence in one child during the first three weeks of school. Conclusions and implications arising from the study are submitted in chapter 5. Conclusions focus on some of the possible reasons for nonconformist behavior in novice students.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

A case study design was employed to examine the development of social competence in one class of novice junior kindergartners in St. John's Separate School during the first 3 weeks of school. The principal method of data collection was participant observation. Site selection, establishing rapport, data collection, researcher effect, and data analysis are described below.

Site Selection and Preliminaries to Field Entry

Site selection was facilitated through extensive preliminary observations of five junior and senior kindergarten classes and four nursery school classes. These observations disclosed that within reasonable limits, preschool classes are similar in many aspects. Subsequently, permission was sought and granted to conduct the research in one of the classes that I had visited the previous term. Meetings with the teacher and principal, in which the purpose and method of the study were discussed, established "rapport and trust" (Erickson, 1986, p. 142). Ethical review procedures, as outlined by the Faculty of Education, Queen's University, were implemented and a statement of intent and consent was signed by the principal, teacher, and parents of all the students. All the participants consented to my proposals regarding duration of observation, data-collection

methods, researcher role, and method of reporting findings. The class selected for observation had an enrolment of 22 (13 girls and 9 boys), with one female classroom teacher and one female French teacher. The students attended school five one-half days per week. (A detailed site description is provided in chapter 3.) It had been determined that three weeks of continuous observation would provide sufficient data to generate insights into the process of first becoming a student. Nevertheless, arrangements were made to extend the observation period, if required by unforeseen circumstances such as teacher absence or school closure. An extension was later deemed unnecessary.

Establishing Rapport

The richness of data yielded through the ethnographic techniques of Corsaro (1981), Davies (1982), King (1978), Jackson (1987), and Willes (1981) influenced my decision to follow their example and assume the role of participant observer. Lofland and Lofland (1984) define participant observation as "a process in which the investigator establishes and sustains a many-sided and relatively long-lasting relationship with a human association in its natural setting for the purpose of developing a scientific understanding of the association" (p. 12). The relationship that I sought to establish (primarily with the students) was that of fellow student. Although I

recognized that the students might experience some initial difficulty accepting an adult as a peer, this approach was considered to provide the most reliable access to the children's unaffected thoughts and actions. The belief that I was "in the same knowledge state as the participants" (Delamont, 1983, p. 108) was expected to encourage the students to be open and candid when interacting with each other, with the teacher, and with me. The classroom teacher, Ms. Brown, greatly assisted in supporting me in the role of student. Most of the time I was treated as neither a teacher nor as a Mother's helper. For example, when each student was given a sticker for tidying, I received a sticker also.

Each day of the first week, as new students arrived, I briefly explained that I had never been to junior kindergarten and that "I needed to learn all about it." This explanation justified my use of a notebook and multi-directional, audio tape recorder and it established the credibility and authenticity of my questions; that is, I was genuinely seeking information.

The "creative interview" (Douglas, 1985, p. 25) encompassing "the use of many strategies and tactics of interaction, largely based on an understanding of friendly feelings and intimacy to optimize cooperative, mutual disclosure and a creative search for mutual understanding" (p. 25) that Douglas uses with adults was found to be an

equally effective method for soliciting responses from very young children. Additionally, this method fostered the establishment of a sense of rapport and trust between the students and myself. Throughout the three weeks I interacted, to the extent that it was realistically possible, as a fellow student. In conjunction with the creative interview techniques, unstructured or spontaneous questions were successfully employed to uncover students' interpretations of episodes. This approach was found to complement Simons's (1981) judgement of unstructured questions as a useful tool "when you are not sure what you want to know but are prepared to depend on your capacity to recognize significant data on appearance" (p. 28).

Because the major data source was students' natural behavior, I made every effort to avoid influencing the normal flow of events. (Researcher effect is discussed below.) Therefore, my behavior was that of a passive participant. Consequently, I would "hang around" and wait for something to happen. On different occasions I would variously, passively watch, ask students if I could join them in an activity such as the water table, or I would be asked by students to join them in an activity such as building a road. Ms. Brown also was a valuable data source. Because she was so friendly and cooperative, rapport and trust were established at the outset of the study.

Data Collection

Field notes were recorded continuously from 12:45 to 3:30 p.m. every day. Additionally, 12 hours of audio tape were collected. Further, data collection began from the time contact was first made with the school and continued for several months after I left the field. Data were differentiated into low-inference descriptors (concrete, precise accounts of what actually happened) and high-inference descriptors (observer interpretive comments) (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). All names of the students, the teachers, and the school are pseudonyms. The field notes, audio tape transcriptions, and summary observations constitute the data base from which findings, conclusions, and implications are presented later.

To ensure a representative sampling of each day's activities, audio tape recordings were made of various routines such as snack time, circle, free activities, and students' arrival and departure. As each day passed, the tape recorder was left on for longer periods of time. However, data from the tapes were found not to be particularly useful for the following reasons: Audio recordings provide scant information related to context such as who is speaking or where participants are located. Furthermore, because the nature of the study did not accommodate prearranged interviews or conversations, a significant number of events were not taped. Video and

audio recordings would be more useful but this required an unreasonable increase in funds and personnel. Although accurate and detailed field notes obviate the need for audio recordings, these are recommended to enhance the validity of the data.

Data collection began without preconceptions regarding the kinds of behavior that would provide insights into the development of social competence. Therefore, insofar as it was possible, everything that the students and teacher said and did was recorded in my field notes. For the reasons previously stated, no attempt was made to tape record continuously. Throughout the first week all the students were observed as closely as possible. However, it became apparent that a change was required in the design of the study. I had planned (somewhat optimistically) to examine significant incidents as they were experienced by all the children. This proved to be untenable since it was impossible for me to monitor simultaneously the actvities of 22 junior kindergartners. Further, initial observations revealed that it is not sufficient to analyse the isolated events experienced by numerous children. Although these events may be significant in and of themselves, they tend not to present a comprehensive picture of how the process of becoming a student evolves. Therefore, towards the end of the first week I determined that Aaron and Mary, neither of whom had

attended nursery school, would be suitable candidates for studying the development of social competence. For purposes of comparison and contrast, the behavior of Jane, Alice, and Craig (who had attended nursery school) also was closely monitored. This is not to imply that data were not collected on other students, since every person in the class contributed to the context within which incidents occurred.

Data associated with how students overtly reacted to incidents were relatively easy to acquire. For example, it was not difficult to note that Emily spoke in an enraged manner when Bob attempted to help her tidy up. However, data pertaining to how students described, interpreted, and understood events were more difficult to access. This difficulty meant that understanding the development of social competence through descriptions from the children's perspective was more elusive than originally had been anticipated. There are several reasons for this and all concern timing. Thus, as in the research of Edwards and Furlong (1978), I found the timing of some incidents such that seeking comments from students immediately following the event would have been too disruptive. For instance, when an incident occurred in circle, it would have been unreasonable to seek interpretations while circle activities were still in progress.

It also was often unreasonable to follow up an event at a more convenient time (such as after dismissal from circle) because this required the interruption of the activity to which the students were going. Their attention frequently was not easily or successfully directed to a previous event. Additionally, as Fivush (1984) similarly notes, students often appeared to have forgotten the event or they no longer considered it relevant.

Finally, some incidents were considered by me to be too fleeting or of such limited duration that no attempt was made to initiate a discussion about the incident. Notwithstanding these difficulties, data providing insight into how junior kindergartners interpreted, described, and understood events associated with their development as socially competent students were recorded through diligent observation.

A substantial portion of the data originated from nonverbal behavior and supports the contention of Woolfolk and Brooks (1983) that nonverbal behavior communicates messages that are quite as significant as verbal behavior. Thus, particular care was taken to record behavior accompanying speech (paralanguage), use of space and distance (proxemics), and gesture, facial expression, eye gaze, and so on (coverbal behavior). Other researchers (Atkinson, 1981; Delamont, 1983; Ervin-Tripp, 1982;

Shultz, 1979) stress the importance of recording the full context of classroom interactional events and this procedure also was followed.

Researcher Effect

With regard to researcher effect, it is obvious that my presence influenced the development of social competence of all the junior kindergartners. This effect was built into the study because I deliberately assumed the role of fellow student. Therefore, I was not a detached observer. Rather, I was a person who attempted to travel the same road as first-time students--a person who was not an authority figure but someone who was learning and growing as a student, with the students. Nevertheless, I was not the only person to influence the students' socialization. Ms. Brown, the French teacher, 22 students, and numerous visitors also interacted with each other to create an environment that affected how the children learned to become students. The issue here is the extent to which my presence and behavior may have affected the normal flow of events in the first 3 weeks of school.

The credibility of the data derived from this case study depended, in part, on the fulfilment of at least two conditions. First, as a teacher and mother, I had to suppress the somewhat natural and overpowering urge to offer advice and to control situations. Second, in order

to "get inside the students' heads" and be privy to their confidences and spontaneous behavior, I had to make it possible for the students to believe that I was not an authority figure but rather a novice student like themselves. I submit that both conditions were met albeit with some initial difficulty. Examples from the data will demonstrate how I attempted to maintain my role as a student and how the students reacted to me.

Several unforeseen, but perhaps fortuitous, events countered my student role. For example, I got off to a poor start on Day 1 because Ms. Brown left four students (Aaron, Judy, Alice, and me) alone on for snack. If I had not been an adult, Ms. Brown would not have left the students unsupervised. Nevertheless, this situation afforded me the opportunity to observe the students' behavior without the constraints of adult controls. I had already explained to the students that I was in class as a student and not as a teacher or helper. However, when Aaron could not open his lunch bag, I immediately returned to my adult role and offered to help. Interestingly, Aaron declined my offer, saying, "I'll wait until the teacher comes back." My concern that offering assistance could be viewed as adult behavior is understandable. On the other hand, the data show that some junior kindergartners also offered help and advice. For example, Jane advised Kristie that her face was dirty and Marvin

Helped Susan to use a glue bottle.

The line between student and adult was not always clear cut. On at least one occasion I assumed the role of student and adult simultaneously. The event, which will be discussed in chapter 3, occurred during tidy-up on Day 10. As a student I was expected to help tidy but I was not expected to direct or help other students to tidy. Nonetheless, I "coached" some students in order to speed up tidying so that we could go outside to play.

Although making a special effort to refrain from volunteering either help or advice over the 3 weeks, I continued to find myself periodically reverting to adult behavior. For instance, when Aaron started to follow Doug to the playground on Day 4 (while en route to the buses), I explained that Doug's brother, who supervised Doug after school,would bring Doug to the bus. It is improbable that a fellow student would have made that suggestion. Thus, I clearly interfered with the natural course of events. Upon reflection, the better approach would have been to say nothing and wait for further developments.

The data show that these lapses into adult behavior were infrequent, even though there were numerous occasions when I was tempted to offer advice. For example, when Aaron would ask me, "What's happening?" I consistently answered, "I don't know." Similarly, when Jane asked me why we had to put our snacks away, I said I did not know.

I also refrained from becoming involved in student-interaction problems. Therefore, when Aaron complained to me that "they won't let me play at the sand with them," and Martha told me that "Doug is spitting at me," I would say, "Mmmm...oh?" but take no action.

From the outset of the study, relatively few students asked me to solve such student-interaction problems, and by Day 8 students always went directly to Ms. Brown with these kinds of complaints. However, other kinds of interaction with the students steadily increased over the observation period. This interaction was usually initiated by the students. For example, I received invitations to join them at snack, to sit beside them during a story, and to participate in building a road.

However, because I decided that the pretense of my being a student could not be carried to unrealistic limits, occasions arose when I maintained the adult role. For instance, when Martha wanted to sit on my lap, when Emily came to me for comfort because she pinched her fingers, or when Russ asked me to undo the knot in his painting smock, I did not turn them away.

I found the incident with Russ particularly interesting and amusing. As it happened, I could not undo the knot, and Russ said to me, "You're not very good," to which I replied, "Well, ask Ms. Brown then." The uninhibited reaction of Russ to my apparent incompetence

was characteristic of the students' reactions to me throughout the entire observation period. Their spontaneous interaction with me might be attributed, in part, to two major factors. First, I told them that I had never been to junior kindergarten and that they could help me by telling me things I should know about school. Second, I never indicated that ar thing they said or did was in any way unacceptable to me. Consequently, the students seemed prepared to say things to me or do things in my presence that they might not have done in the presence of a teacher or another adult. For example, Alice, Susan, and Janine informed me that they planned to tidy "nothing." It is unlikely that they would have given Ms. Brown as frank an answer. The students' candor and openess with me provided unique insights into how they interpreted and performed some of the actions associated with the role of student.

An incident that best demonstrates how little my presence affected students' behavior occurred when Ms. Brown was out of the classroom on Day 13. At that time, although the class was sitting on the floor, on two occasions approximately half the class got up and went to look out the door. It seems reasonable to assume that if I had been perceived as any kind of authority figure, the students would have remained sitting or looked to see if I disapproved. They did neither.

It should be noted that circumstances in the St. John's junior kindergarten class afforded me an exceptional opportunity to observe students in the absence of the teacher. Thus, if it had not been for Doug's behavior, Ms. Brown would not have been absent from the classroom on so many occasions and I would not have been able to record students' unsupervised behavior. In discussions with Ms. Brown, she frequently commented that she would like to be "a fly on the wall" in order to see how students interacted when an adult was not present. I was fortunate enough to be a fly on the wall.

The presentation of the data analysis, particularly in chapter 4, may leave the reader with the impression that I spent every minute of the 3-week observation period with Aaron. However, this was not the case. It is true that I always tried to be aware of where he was and what he was doing, but I recognized that "sticking to him like glue" would unduly affect the normal development of his social competence. Furthermore, it was undesirable that any of the other children perceive me as "favoring" a particular student. I interacted with the entire class and collected data from all the children. Aaron, Mary, Jane, Doug, Jack, Craig, and Emily were especially rich sources of data. However, having determined by the end of the first week that recording Aaron's development in detail would be particularly useful, I made certain that I

observed him as closely, yet as unobstrusively, as possible.

As a participant observer, my major concern was the extent to which my presence may have prompted Aaron to act in a manner different from how he would have acted if I had not been in class. For example, Aaron's behavior left little doubt that he wanted to be near me when we sat on the floor in a circle and lined up. If I had not been present, it is quite possible that he would have attempted to establish positions near Ms. Brown in the circle formation and line-up. Unfortunately, this eventuality will never be known. Similarly, it will never be known if my presence led Aaron to articulate his thoughts more frequently than usual. Because most of Aaron's remarks to me were unsolicited and seemed to resemble comments that one makes when thinking out loud, it seems likely that he would have made some audible remarks regardless of my presence. However, even assuming that he would have not made any comments, I am convinced that he would still have had similar thoughts. Interestingly, the data show that when I actively sought comments or information from Aaron, he usually appeared uncommunicative.

My overt relationship with Aaron resembled my relationship with the other students. For instance, although Aaron occasionally asked me to read a story or help close his tote bag, various other students made

similar requests. Likewise, Aaron's desire to sit close to me was not unique, since a number of students also attempted to secure a spot near me when we sat on the floor in a circle and lined up. Nevertheless, several aspects of my association with Aaron differed perceptibly from that of some of the other students. For example, Aaron never joined me at the snack table whereas Alice and Jane often did. The fact that snack time frequently became somewhat raucous (a condition Aaron seemed to dislike) may explain why Aaron avoided joining anyone at the snack table. Aaron rarely invited me to play with him, although he occasionally asked me to look at what he was doing. On the other hand, I received frequent invitations to play from students such as Allen, Jane, Doug, and Ada.

My experiences in the junior kindergarten class were similar to those of Davies (1982), Corsaro (1981), and King (1978) to the extent that within a few days my presence seemed to have no effect on any of the participants.

A discussion on research effect is incomplete without addressing the issue of researcher bias in the recording and analysis of data. Hargreaves (1986) notes that "interpretations of phenomena can and often do reflect the theoretical predilections of the researcher" (p. 160). Similarly, Adelman (1981) observes that interpretive

research uses "talk as a means of reconstructing the realities of those being studied--a process that involves the researcher in critical reflection of his own predilections" (p. 14), while West (1977), in a discussion on participant observation, cautions that "the particular personality and role of the researcher are obviously critical" (p. 68) when data are collected and analysed. Clearly, there exists the possibility that my concerns and biases could have resulted in a distorted view of occurrences. Furthermore, these concerns may be reflected in the categories developed in the analysis. Nevertheless, I am confident that the research was undertaken with an open mind regarding the nature of the data that would shape the analysis. Lofland and Lofland (1984) suggest that participant observation in a natural setting tends to reduce the problems of error and bias. Additionally, they point out that a well-documented study affords the reader an opportunity to judge if researcher bias unduly affected findings and conclusions.

Analysis

Data from field notes, summary observations, and tape transcriptions (samples are provided in Appendix A) were scanned, coded, and then classified according to patterns of behavior. Patterns that evolved from this procedure established the grounds for describing the process whereby some junior kindergartners learned to become students.

Particular attention was given to context when events were analysed. Interpretations of events and incidents were "situationally contextualized" (Pollard, 1980, p. 58) in terms of factors such as time, space, and other participants; that is, these factors were all taken into consideration when classroom events were examined and analysed.

The verbal and nonverbal behavior of the teacher and students constituted a major part of the data. Because the study of classroom talk contributes to the knowledge of developing social processes (Edwards, 1980; Ervin-Tripp, 1977, 1982; Garnica, 1981; Sharp & Green, 1984), student and adult discourse was analysed. As researchers note, adults and children often misinterpret each other's behavior. For example, Davies (1982) suggests that adults "impute meanings" (p. 18) to children's behavior, although these meanings, when described to children, often do not reflect accurately what was intended by the children. Woolfolk and Brooks (1983) note that researchers have been unable to interpret classroom interaction accurately because they

> have often assumed that the...behavior of teachers as perceived and mapped by the adult investigator is the behavior to which the child responds. The child may have a very different view of the adult's behavior particularly when

incongruent messages are involved. (p. 122)

Nonverbal behavior was analysed because, as Jackson (1968) states, "a student's yawn or a teacher's frown...may contain more information about classroom life than might appear at first glance" (p. 177).

Findings are presented as descriptive narrative supplemented with verbatim protocols of teacher, student, and researcher conversation. Extracts of accounts were selected to reflect accurately the experiences of the children as they learned to adapt to the role of student. Site description and an overview of class routines are presented in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

THE SETTING AND THE CHILDREN

In order to understand better the manner in which some junior kindergarten students develop social competence within the school environment, an understanding of what constitutes that environment is useful. To that end the general characteristics of the school and class under study are outlined below. The outline includes a brief summary of the developmental level of junior kindergartners and a description of the major routines that form a typical day's activities. These routines are called circle, tidying, line-up, snack time, and free activities.

General Characteristics

The classroom is located in St. John's Roman Catholic Separate School in a town with a population of just under 5,000. The 12-room school serves junior kindergarten to Grade 8 and has an enrolment of approximately 325. The school has a male principal and the building includes one gymnasium, one library, one home economics classroom, and one shop classroom. Additionally, there is an extensive playground area divided into primary, junior, and intermediate sections.

The class which was studied has an enrolment of 22 in the charge of the teacher, Ms. Brown. Although the class spent a majority of its time in the main classroom during

the 3-week observation period, the gymnasium and an additional classroom containing various activity areas were also used occasionally. The main classroom is approximately one and one-half times the size of a regular classroom. (A map of the classroom is provided in Appendix B.)

The teacher has an honors degree in English and an Ontario Teacher's Certificate. She has taught for 12 years, all at the elementary level. Although teaching junior and senior kindergarten for most of those years, she has not acquired any specialized primary qualifications.

To enrol in junior kindergarten, students must be 4 and usually no more than 5 by December 31. Of the 13 girls and 9 boys enroled, none will turn 5 before December 31. Except for three students, all are bused to and from school, including those who live in town. The students attend school every day, Monday through Friday, from 1:00-3:20 p.m. Senior (Grades 6-8) female students meet the buses every day, walking into school with the junior kindergartners and helping them to remove and hang up coats and back packs. The student helpers return at 2:15 and stay until 2:30, assisting at snack time, tidying, and reading a story to the students. During this time Ms. Brown is usually absent. The student helpers return again at 3:20 to assist in taking the students to meet the

buses. Every day, from 1:00-1:20, the class receives French instruction from Ms. White. Because Ms. White did not want the class distracted by the presence of other adults, Ms. Brown and I left the room.

A staggered and delayed entry procedure is used at the school. Thus, on the first day of school for junior kindergarten, Day 1, Monday, September 12, 1988, Aaron, Alice, and Judy were in class. On Day 2, Ada, Doug, Janine, Martha, Jack, and Marvin arrived, bringing the total to 9. Mary, Joan, Bob, Kristie, and Heather arrived on Day 3, bringing the total to 14. On Day 4, Russ, Jane, Emily, and Jim brought the total to 18, and the arrival of Craig, Emma, Susan, and Allen on Friday, (Day 5) completed the enrolment of 22. Ms. Brown had conducted parent and student interviews in the classroom early in September. Therefore, when students arrived in mid-September, they were not totally unfamiliar with the lay-out of the classroom.

Ms. Brown provided information related to the children's age, school experience, and unusual developmental characteristices. The youngest student is Mary who turned 4 in December, 1988. The oldest student is Allen who turned 5 in January, 1989. Nine have attended nursery school. With the exception of Doug, none of the students requires any unusual attention. Doug has a serious speech impediment as well as behavior problems.

During the observation period, Ms. Brown did not have any help with Doug. However, by mid-October an aide was engaged primarily to attend to Doug.

The classroom routines of a typical day in the first week of a junior kindergartner at St. John's School include arriving on the bus, crossing the parking lot and entering the classroom, getting into circle for roll call and French, crafts and free activity, snack, getting into circle for "show and tell" and a story, occasionally lining up to go to the gymnasium or the second classroom, and lining up to cross the parking lot to meet the buses and return home. The main activity areas utilized by the students are the climber, play kitchen, large blackboard, toy corner, large blocks, painting, and water table, sand table, puzzle table, and craft table. Students interact with Ms. Brown and each other at all of these areas.

A slightly more detailed look at the day's schedule in the first week shows that students begin arriving by bus at 12:45. Student helpers bring the students across the parking lot and into the coatroom, helping to remove coats and locate assigned hooks. Students play freely until the 12:55 bell, when Ms. Brown calls them to sit on the floor in a circle (marked off by different colored carpet). Following roll call Ms. White arrives and Ms. Brown leaves. When Ms. Brown returns at 1:20, students remain seated in circle for a few more minutes while a

craft is explained or they are dismissed immediately for free activity.

Around 1:55, students are asked to tidy up before lining up to go to the gymnasium. At 2:14, students line up and return to the classroom, get lunch kits from the coatroom, and sit at one of several tables. At 2:15 the student helpers arrive, and Ms. Brown leaves. When she returns at 2:30, students are expected to have finished eating and to have put away lunch kits. Students then return to more free activity that is followed by circle, which may include variously a story, songs, and show and tell, with the sequence sometimes reversed. (Show and tell involves designated students showing and describing to other students a self-selected object or simply talking about something of interest.) Depending on the sequence of free activity and circle, students are asked to tidy up. If free activity is scheduled last, students are called to circle again, usually to receive completed crafts to take home. They then don coats and back packs, line up at the door and with Ms. Brown and student helpers accompanying them, leave the building, cross the parking lot, and wait for the buses. The buses park adjacent to the playground.

The students function within what can be described as an open program in which activity forms the base, unlike a traditional program where formalized seatwork forms the

base. Further, students are free to go to an activity such as the craft table when an empty chair is available.

From my position as an adult participant observer, the behavior requirements associated with becoming a socially competent student in St. John's School appeared quite straightforward. (How the children perceived these requirements is discussed below and in chapters 4 and 5.) Underlying virtually every aspect of students' behavior is the assumption that they will learn (sooner or later) to be polite, relatively quiet, share, refrain from fighting or otherwise posing a threat to themselves or fellow students, and generally listen to and follow directions related to the day's routine. For example, students are expected to come to circle when requested. Furthermore, when they are in circle they are expected to attend quietly to whatever activity is occurring and to remain sitting until dismissed. Similarly, students are expected to line up quietly and walk behind Ms. Brown to a designated area.

The Junior kindergartners in Ms. Brown's class possess varying degrees of the interactional skills required of students. Some students have been exposed to these skills in the home or in settings such as nursery school. Others, lacking similar exposure, bring few of these skills to the classroom. Through the use of explicit and implicit directives, Ms. Brown gradually

conditions the children to the requirements of becoming socially competent students. It is useful to remember that this study examined the behavior of children who were only about 4 years old. These young folk are obligated to grasp the nuances of the student role. The resources that they can draw upon to fulfil this obligation are addressed below.

Development Level

Children who are approximately 4 years old are going through a period of rapid physical and mental growth. No two children at this age are at the same stage of development and even the actions of one child can fluctuate wildly between mature and immature behavior. A perspective of the capabilities of these children, based on a Toronto Board of Education document (1980), is provided here.

Physically, junior kindergartners are undergoing significant changes. Body proportions change as the torso and limbs lengthen. The children have high energy levels but tire easily. Although they are capable of intense periods of concentration, they are easily distracted. Intellectually, they begin to use subjective language. However, while meaning is obvious to the child, it is not always clear to the listener. Because thought is not always analysed, action often precedes thought. Past, present, and future terminology presents difficulty, since

time is understood as now. Socially and emotionally these children manifest a desire to develop personal autonomy. They frequently play alone or beside but not with, others. They need reasonable limits and controls and usually conform to avoid the consequences of inappropriate behavior.

Junior kindergartners are extremely vulnerable, for their "intense need to understand their world" (Tizard & Hughs, 1987, p. 40) may lead educators to overestimate the capabilities of this age group. It is important that practitioners and researchers never lose sight of how young junior kindergartners are.

Major Routines

Five major routines have been identified in Ms. Brown's classroom: circle, tidying up, line-up, snack time, and free activities. These routines are discussed below with examples from the data, beginning with circle.

Circle

The circle routine is a procedure in which students are required to sit on the floor, usually in a circle outlined on the floor but sometimes in a casual grouping in front of Ms. Brown. As previously mentioned, although the purpose of circle varies, the requirements are to remain sitting quietly and to pay attention until dismissed. However, circle is ultimately intended to congregate students in a relatively confined area for a

specific purpose.

For students who have been in nursery school, kindergym, or similar environments, the notion of circle is probably familiar. For other students, the circle concept is not always understandable. In some cases the purpose of circle is not understood and even openly questioned. For example, at 3:00 on Day 1, the three students present were asked for the first time to sit on the outside of the circle. Ms. Brown initially did not explain the purpose of this particular circle. All three sat down, but Aaron, who had not attended nursery school, promptly left the circle to play with the abacus. Ms. Brown called him back, he sat down and almost immediately got up and went to the blackboard. When Ms. Brown called him back again to sit down, Aaron stated, "I'm not tired." Ms. Brown replied, "Sometimes we have to sit even if we're not tired." She then explained that she would read a story to them. Aaron sat down and remained in circle until the story was finished but seemed restless and did not appear interested in the story.

Mary was another child who had not attended nursery school. On Mary's first day (Day 3) Ms. Brown called the students to the 12:55 circle. When Mary did not come, Ms. Brown asked her to come and sit down. Mary replied, "Why?" Ms. Brown did not offer an explanation and repeated the request. Mary sat down. At 2:00, Ms. Brown

announced that following tidy-up the class would go to the gym. After approximately 15 minutes Ms. Brown called the students to circle. Once again Mary asked, "Why?" Ms. Brown did not reply. After another delay of about 10 minutes Ms. Brown asked the students to come to circle for prayer before snack. (Prayer was not explained. Further, this was the first time prayer was part of the day's routine.) Even with coaxing, Mary refused to sit in circle. She remained out of circle during prayer and before Mary was allowed to have her snack she was detained by Ms. Brown. Ms. Brown spoke briefly to her, whereupon Mary apologized and went to snack.

What may appear to the teacher or an "experienced" student as a logical procedure can be perceived quite differently by a first-time student. Just as circle can seem to make no sense to a beginning student, so too can tidy-up routines appear unnecessary.

Tidying

At St. John's School, the routine of tidying usually occurs immediately following free activity periods. The litter created by free activity is cleaned up just before dismissal for home or activities such as circle. There are few tidying rules: When Ms. Brown announces tidy-up, students stop what they are doing and all the children help put things away. Unlike circle routines that can represent totally new experiences for some junior

kindergartners, tidying is a procedure that most students probably have been exposed to in the home environment. Nonetheless, conforming to the routine does not seem to be facilitated by students' familiarity with tidying. Research (Corsaro, 1988) and junior kindergarten teachers have found that students develop techniques (some quite ingenious) for avoiding and delaying the tidying routine. Terms such as "avoid" and "delay" are used to describe the children's apparent reaction to tidying. This is not to suggest that I have proof of their intentions. However, the data clearly show that some of them deliberately seemed to find other things to do during tidy-up.

Playing with what is supposed to be put away appears to interfere with tidying. For many of the students most things in the classroom are new and interesting, and they seem unwilling to put these things away. For instance, on Emily's second day at school she was "tidying" a game when Bob tried to help her. Seemingly quite outraged, Emily screamed, "I'm tidying that." Ms. Brown suggested that Emily let Bob help but Emily replied, "I don't want any help." Bob left and Emily returned to her tidying (which was really playing).

Another maneuver that is apparently designed to evade tidying is suddenly remembering that snack or a craft has not been finished. On Day 12, even though Alice was told to tidy before she had her snack, she and Heather snacked

during tidy-up. Similarly, from Day 4 to the end of the observation period, Aaron persistently occupied himself with crafts and snack during tidying. A novel avoidance technique was demonstrated by Emma who simply sat down and declared, "My hands are tired." Ms. Brown kindly suggested to Emma that her hands became tired only at tidy-up. Emma did not comment and somewhat resignedly got up and began slowly moving around the room. She neither picked up nor put away anything. Rather, she seemed to be making a pretense of tidying.

Other students did not even pretend to tidy and actually appeared amused by what seemed to be the "game" of evading tidying. Thus, when Ms. Brown announced tidy-up on Day 3, Martha, Kristie, and Ada went to the wall blackboard and began to play with the magnetic alphabet letters. I walked over to them and before I spoke, Martha said to me, "Isn't this a funny way to clean up?" I agreed and wondered aloud if this was what Ms. Brown asked us to do. Smiling, Martha replied, "No" and continued to play. Similarly, when tidy-up was announced on Day 10, I asked Alice, Susan, and Janine what they planned to tidy. All three, grinning, said, "Nothing"--which is precisely what they did.

In Ms. Brown's class it appeared that some students tidied while others were "allowed" to do something else. One reasonable explanation is that it was extremely

difficult for one teacher to keep track of 22 students, especially when one of them (Doug) demanded much of her attention. Interestingly, on Day 3 Ms. Brown introduced sanctioning measures for the first time: Students were informed that they could not go to the gymnasium because tidying took too long. Throughout the observation period Ms. Brown continued to tell students that if they tidied quickly they could go to the gymnasium or out to play.

The second of two occasions on which students went to the playground was on Day 10. The event illustrates how some students try to make sense of a situation. When Ms. Brown said, "Let's tidy up fast so we can go out and play," she remained working at the craft table with several students. Partly because I helped some of the students, tidying did not take long. With everything put away, the students became restless waiting for Ms. Brown. For example, Jane kept asking, "What are we going to do?" Finally, Doug turned off the lights (an attention-getting signal that most students knew was only supposed to be used by Ms. Brown). At this point Ms. Brown said, "Maybe he's telling us to come to circle." The class did get into circle, Ms. Brown complimented them on the fast tidying, and they eventually got outside to play. (The fast tidying mainly was due to my involvement and is an example of researcher effect. Researcher effect was

discussed in chapter 2.) The salient point here is that, as requested, the students tidied up quickly. Had it not been for Doug's audacious light-switching maneuver the reward of play might never have been realized.

A final incident demonstrates how one student managed to avoid tidying yet still received his reward. On Day 13, Ms. Brown promised stickers to "good helpers" for the first time. Most students made a noticeable effort to do at least some token tidying. However, Aaron went directly to the craft table, staying there until tidying was completed and Ms. Brown had called the class to circle. In circle, Ms. Brown began asking students, in turn, what they tidied and then gave them a sticker for their efforts. I was sitting beside Aaron and observed him picking up a small plastic animal that was on the floor immediately behind us. He put it into a nearby toy box. When it was Aaron's turn to say what he tidied, he got up, picked up the toy, showed it to Ms. Brown, put it back, and sat down. He got his sticker.

The recurring pattern of finding something else to do during tidying suggests the obvious: Most junior kindergarten students do not want to tidy up. Further, they go to imaginative lengths, not only to avoid tidying but also to collect the rewards associated with tidying. At St. John's School, the avoidance behavior became less frequent over the 3 weeks possibly because Ms. Brown

altered the day's schedule so that student helpers did most of the tidying. Nevertheless, the junior kindergartners continued to be responsible for some tidying. Once they learned where things went and that not tidying might result in denial of special privileges, the majority began to conform to the routine of tidying. This is not to imply that they saw it as a reasonable routine. Similarly, they did not necessarily see line-up as reasonable. To the junior kindergartners at St. John's School, lining up and moving to another area might conceivably be the most confusing routine to learn.

Line-Up

Lining up generally is not an end in itself. Students line up in order to move in a controlled manner from one location to another. (In this discussion the term "line-up" includes movement.) Although most of the children may not have understood that the ultimate purpose of line-up is to control their behavior, they quickly learned that lining up is associated with moving to another area. Ms. Brown reinforced this connection by following a directive to line up with an explanation of where the class was going.

St. John's junior kindergartners are required to line up a minimum of two times each day: once when they get off the buses, cross the parking lot, and come into school; and again when they leave the school, cross the

parking lot, and meet the buses. Throughout a day, students might line up four more times. Further, they may line up in at least six different locations such as bus, main classroom door, coatroom door, outside doors, gymnasium, and second classroom. During the final seven days of observation students only lined up twice a day.

Unlike the tidying routine, the line-up routine has numerous rules. For example, students are told not to push to the front of the line, stand too close to each other, run, get a drink en route, or move forward until given permission. Additionally, students are asked to line up quickly, be quiet, line up behind the restraining line in the main classroom, walk behind Ms. Brown, and walk single file with hands folded. These examples do not exhaust the list of rules associated with line-up. Rather, they set the framework within which several vignettes will illustrate how some junior kindergartners began to learn to line up.

To appreciate incidents that occurred in the first 3 weeks of school, it is useful to review three conditions at St. John's School. First, at least two student helpers met the buses every day, lined up the students, and accompanied them into the classroom. With two supervisors, the line-up and walk into the school was usually uneventful because the front and back of the line could easily be monitored. The student helpers rarely

assisted when students lined up for the 3:20 buses. Second, Ms. Brown had no class-time adult assistance during the observation period. (Imagine trying to walk 22 inquisitive, active 4-year-olds from one place to another!) Third, Doug's behavior problems included leaving the classroom particularly when line-up was announced. Because Ms. Brown had to leave the room to bring him back, line-up was frequently delayed. Further, Ms. Brown's absence afforded students extra opportunities to "break" the rules.

Joan broke a rule, on Day 3, although she did not know it at the time. Joan had not been to nursery school and this was her first day at school. Presumably, her first exposure to lining up was coming into school from the bus. Her second exposure took place when students went to the second classroom. (On leaving the main classroom Ms. Brown did not tell students to wait until she began to move, perhaps because she was standing at the door and students sensed that they should wait until she gave them permission to begin walking.) Joan's third experience with line-up occurred when Ms. Brown selected Joan to head the line for the return to the main classroom. Ms. Brown stayed in the room, urging students to line up. Meanwhile, Joan dutifully waited at the door for a few moments. However, before all the students were lined up, Joan began walking down the hall. Marvin (an

experienced student) went to bring her back and the rest of the students promptly streamed after both of them. Ms. Brown started to go down the hall to bring the students back but at that moment Doug returned to the second classroom. By the time Ms. Brown retrieved Doug the rest of the students were half-way down the hall. As we left the classroom Ms. Brown said to me, "Well, forget the line-up." Unassisted, the students safely returned to the main classroom.

The follow-the-leader behavior shown in the above incident does not represent an isolated event. Junior kindergartners seem quick to pick up and emulate new behavior patterns, as the following incident illustrates. As students were lining up to go outside on Day 5, Craig's brother arrived to take Craig home early. (The class had not been alerted to this early departure.) When Craig left, the rest of the students followed him down the hall. Unable to bring the students back, Ms. Brown raced ahead of them and lined them up again inside the outside doors. When the group moved outside Doug ran ahead of Ms. Brown. As other students began to follow Doug, Ms. Brown told the class that it was "dangerous" to run ahead of her because there were cars in the parking lot. They stayed behind her. The implication here, as in other directives regarding the parking lot, was that the children should remain behind Ms. Brown so that she could make sure it was

safe to cross the parking lot.

Incidents associated with crossing the parking lot occurred frequently. For instance, on Day 10, students were cautioned to look before crossing the parking lot. On Day 11 they were given the same warning but this time Allen crossed the area ahead of everbody else. When Ms. Brown reminded him to wait for the class, Allen replied, "I already looked." He had, in fact, done exactly what he thought he had been asked to do.

Junior kindergartners' perceptions of adult utterances can produce some amusing comments by the students. For example, on Day 5 Ms. Brown offered the following hint for lining up correctly: "If you can see the back of the head of the person in front of you, you are lined up in a straight line." Alice, off to one side, looked over to a nearby student and proclaimed, "I can see the back of his head." It would be difficult to argue the validity of her observation! Ms. Brown did not comment.

Of the three routines discussed so far (circle, tidying, and line-up), line-up appeared to be the least understood and most difficult routine that St. John's junior kindergartners had to master. The remaining two routines, snack and free activities, were clearly favorites. This is not to suggest that all the students were, ipso facto, socially competent interacting within these routines. Rather, students did not have to be urged

to participate.

Snack Time

In the entire time spent at St. John's School, I did not once observe a junior kindergartner who objected to snack time. Indeed, they made the most of this opportunity to share, compare, and "con" snacks. Like tidying, snacking is not a new experience. Nevertheless, learning the school snack-time routine can pose a challenge to novice students.

The snack routine changed several times during the observation period. On Days 1-4, all the students simultaneously snacked at five tables from 2:15-2:30. With few exceptions throughout the three weeks, Ms. Brown left the classroom from 2:15-2:30. Student helpers supervised in her absence. Initially, students received no explicit rules prior to snack time regarding disposal of snack garbage, length of snack time, or expected behavior during snack. Thus, when Ms. Brown returned to the classroom at 2:30 on Day 1, the children had not finished eating. They were then told, "When all the kids are here we'll have to eat faster." Similarly, after Ms. Brown returned at 2:30 each day students were reminded to put lunch kits away. Students seemed to "discover" acceptable routines for themselves. For example, when the class was in the gymnasium on Day 3 Ms. Brown told them that the 2:15 bell meant it was time for snack. However,

on Day 4, when I asked Joan what the 12:55 bell meant she thought for a moment, replied "snack," promptly got her lunch kit and began to drink her juice. Whereupon, Ms. Brown asked Joan to put away her snack because it was not snack time. From Joan's perspective, it may have seemed quite reasonable to connect yesterday's explanation of the 2:15 bell with today's 12:55 bell and conclude that it must be snack time. However, the snack routine was about to change.

With no formal notification to the class, Ms. Brown changed the snack routine on Day 5. This was brought to my attention at 1:55 by Jane (second day at school) who, noticing two students snacking, said to me, "It's not time...should I tell the teacher?" I replied, "If you want to." She did and Ms. Brown explained, "That's OK, I told them they could eat if they were hungry." At 2:05, the same day, I observed Jane and other students snacking at the playdough table and asked them if we were allowed to play with playdough when we ate. Jane answered, "Sometimes we can and sometimes we can't." (But, implicitly, this is never permitted.) Still on the same day, when Ms. Brown left the room at 2:15 many students brought toys to their snack table, walked around while they ate, and generally behaved in a manner that previously had not been allowed. The student helpers, rather than supervising, tidied the classroom. The junior

kindergartners seemed to enjoy the freedom of the altered routine.

The eating-when-hungry routine became the norm for the remainder of the observation period. To my knowledge, only three other students commented indirectly on the new procedure. All the comments were made on Day 6. First, at 1:30, Mary told Ms. Brown that Doug and Jack were eating. Ms. Brown replied, as before, "That's OK, I told them they could eat if they were hungry." Second, at 2:40, Ms. Brown asked the class to put away snack things. Jane asked me, "Why do you have to put away your snack?" When I indicated that I did not know, Jane ventured, "Maybe it's time to go home." Third, at 2:45, the class was asked to tidy up for story time. Aaron (absent on Day 5 when the snack routine was changed), appearing somewhat concerned, informed me that he had not had his snack. He subsequently brought his snack to circle. Ms. Brown told him he could eat but must sit at an adjacent table. He was soon joined by Jim. This was the first time that students were allowed to eat during circle activities. This also became the norm. However, by Day 12 students were asked to snack before or after story time because those at the table talked too much. From the students' point of view this request was difficult to fulfill because story time occurred at different times each day. Further, they were rarely given more than a few minutes

advance notice of story time. More changes were on the way.

Ms. Brown designated a specific snack table for the first time on Day 8. This action may have been prompted by Martha, Joan, and Marvin, who had moved their snacks to another table. Ms. Brown directed them back to the original table, explaining, "That's our snack table for today...it's the only place we eat...if there are no chairs, wait until someone leaves." This rule changed on Day 14 when students were allowed to eat at two tables.

Commencing on Day 10, students noticeably began to test the limits of snack routines. For instance, Ada and Susan brought their snacks to the puzzle table on Day 10. Ms. Brown asked them to leave and wait until a space was available at the snack table. Motioning to the snack table as they were leaving, Ms. Brown said to me, "Marvin and Craig have solved the problem--they're sitting on the same chair." (This infraction was allowed to continue.) However, Alice and Aaron frequently ate in nondesignated areas and consistently "got away with it," even though, on several occasions, Ms. Brown was aware of the infractions. On the other hand, Martha, an experienced student, was notorious for remaining at the snack table as long as possible in an apparent attempt to con candies and similar treats from other students. On one occasion when she stayed for 45 minutes, Ms. Brown gently reminded her that

other students were waiting for a space. The variety of methods used by students to initiate sharing snacks included a straightforward request. For example, on Day 12, Emily asked Ada to share her treats, stating, "My Mom won't let me have those." When I asked her why, she explained, "They are too sugary--but it's OK because her [Ada's] treats are made with fruit juice."

After the first week of school snack time essentially became a free activity in which students interacted without close teacher supervision. Numerous other free activities at St. John's School provided additional opportunites for junior kindergartners to develop social competence.

Free Activities

When students are not in circle, tidying up, lining up, or snacking, they are free to participate in more than 10 activitiy areas (shown in Appendix B). Behavioral expectations common to all the major routines include no running or fighting and relative quiet. However, limited space and resources require that students learn to share and wait for a turn at most of the free actvities. For example, only a limited number of students are permitted at the climber and water table. The observed junior kindergartners seemed to learn the rules almost immediately. Nevertheless, some incidents illustrate that knowing the rules does not necessarily mean that students

are prepared to conform to these rules.

The climber was extremely popular with the students. Although Ms. Brown explained to individual students that no more than two were allowed on the climber at one time, only constant supervision prevented more than two from playing on it at the same time. Ms. Brown discussed climber safety rules with the entire class on Day 4. When the students were asked if they knew why only two were allowed, several suggested that "we could fall off." Over the next 3 days, as the rule continued to be broken, a number of students would bring this infraction to Ms. Brown's attention. The problem was eliminated, on Day 8, when the climber was dismantled and removed from the classroom. To the students who asked what was happening, Ms. Brown replied, "It's going to the gym so you can play with it there."

The water table also was a popular activity area. On Day 1 the maximum number at the water table was set at three. On Day 2, with four at the table, Ms. Brown said to these students, "How do you think we could solve the problem?" Ms. Brown appeared to want someone to suggest that one person leave and return later when a space was available. This was not to be. Perhaps the students could not think of this solution or they may have thought of it but were uwilling to articulate it, suspecting that the one to solve the problem would also be the one to

leave. With no suggestions forthcoming, Ms. Brown solved the problem herself--she allowed four to stay at the table.

A description of free activities in St. John's junior kindergarten class must include some reference to the students' reactions to Doug. They were clearly aware of his behavior and speech problems. Doug's aggressive behavior, particularly during free activity, caused frequent disruptions. Taking toys from other children was the main source of irritation to the students. Each time Doug took someone's toy, Ms. Brown reminded him to share. Because this happened often, it could be argued that Doug actually facilitated learning the sharing rule.

Students soon began to comment on Doug's behavior. For example, on Day 3, when Doug squirmed off Ms. Brown's lap in circle, Jack stated, "Keep him away from me." By Day 11, frequent references to Doug's behavior included Craig announcing in circle, "We don't like Doug 'cause he takes things from us...he's a fuddy-duddy." On Day 13, the class shared five cardboard guitars. When Ada asked me if she could play with one, I noticed Jim sitting on a guitar. I queried this action and he explained, "I don't want Doug to steal it." Since Doug was already playing with a guitar, one could speculate that Jim's reference to Doug's behavior served an ulterior motive. For example, Jim may not have wanted to share the guitar with anyone

and was using Doug as an excuse for retaining possession.

A preliminary analysis of students' behavioral patterns occurring in the major routines suggests some common themes. For example, the children who lacked previous experience associated with circle, line- up, and tidying seemed unwilling or unable to conform to the behavioral requirements of these routines. When students did not conform, they communicated their intentions verbally and nonverbally. The pattern that emerges from analysis of snack time and free activities is significantly different. Here, the junior kindergartners appear keen to participate regardless of their understanding of expected behavior.

As a participant observer I found that interaction incidents occurring during free activity were the most difficult to isolate, simply because students were scattered over the room. Thus, a decision to participate at the puzzle table precluded my simultaneous participation at the climber. This dilemma prompted me to focus on the development of social competence in a limited number of students. This approach produced detailed data about specific students rather than sparse data about all the students. The themes arising from initial analysis of the data are explored in further detail in chapter 4 and are reconsidered in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 4

AARON BECOMES A STUDENT

In chapter 3 the general characteristics and five major routines of a junior kindergarten class were outlined and illustrated with examples of students' behavior. Tentative interpretations of this behavior are expanded in this chapter. It was noted that charting the development of social competence in all the students was beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, the focus is on a limited number of students. This chapter describes the sequential development, over 3 weeks, of one student--Aaron. More specifically, the reality of becoming a student is presented, to the extent that it is possible, from Aaron's perspective. That is, close attention is given to how Aaron reacted to, described, interpreted, and understood events that contributed to the development of his social competence within the school environment. Ideally, the analysis of Aaron's development as a student would be based on data origination from Aaron exclusively. However, because this was not possible, the reader is reminded that I interpreted many of Aaron's actions, particularly his nonverbal behavior. I strove to see school through his eyes but I was still an interpreter of his experiences.

The decision to focus on Aaron was based on three

conditions. First, I had been able to observe him closely from the first day of school. Second, because he was a child who possessed little preschool or extraschool experience, he fitted my definition of a novice student. Third, he seemed prepared to communicate verbally and nonverbally his apparent discomfort or interest relative to various activities. The latter condition was essential if I was to gain a first-hand understanding of how a young child adapted to the role of student. Of the children who had been to nursery school or the equivalent, Jane was selected to provide a contrast to Aaron because, like Aaron, Jane articulated her understanding of classroom routines.

Aaron began school on Day 1 as an inexperienced student. His behavior appeared to be that of someone equipped with only rudimentary school-routine skills. By Day 14 he had not only mastered all the routines but had also discovered ways to "beat the system." The road to acquiring social competence was not always smooth. How Aaron navigated that road is described as it unfolded in one-week blocks.

Week 1

Aaron was 3.11 years old when he began school. He has a 1-year-old brother and comes from a two-parent family. Both parents work outside the home. A babysitter comes to the home. The family lives on the outskirts of

town with few residences nearby. Aaron has no physical or mental handicaps. He had not attended nursery school or any similar organized activity such as kindergym. Aaron attended 13 of the first 15 days of school. He was absent on Day 5, and Day 9 was a teachers' professional development day. Aaron was one of three students who started school on Day 1. This circumstance facilitated the recording of a substantial amount of his behavior during the first days of school.

om Day 1 to the end of the observation period on Day 14, a well-defined pattern emerged regarding Aaron's apparent desire for procedural explanations. He frequently demonstrated his need for explanations by asking, "What's happening?" This need to understand new situations often appeared to manifest itself as a refusal to participate in some activities. Although Aaron was soft-spoken and thus appeared unassertive, he demonstrated on his first day at school that he was not prepared to conform readily to every class routine. Viewed retrospectively, several incidents on Day 1 were shown to be accurate predictors of the major behavior patterns of Aaron that characterized how he eventually learned to become a student.

The first indication of Aaron's desire to know what was happening occurred during snack time. At 2:15 Ms. Brown settled Aaron, Alice, and Judy at a table with their

snacks and then left the room. Aaron's snack was in a plastic bag that was closed with a twist-tie. When he could not open it I offered to help but he said he wanted to "wait until the teacher comes back." I asked him if he knew where she was. He replied, "Yeah, I know where she is...maybe she's gone downstairs." A noise was heard at that moment and Aaron said, "Who slammed the door?" Alice said, "I think he did it by accident." Aaron did not reply but left the table to play at the blackboard and climber for approximately five minutes. Upon returning to the snack table he said, "I wonder when the teacher is going to be back?" Shortly thereafter Judy said, "I hear something...a door closing...maybe it's our teacher." Aaron said, "Show me it...show me the door...I want you to show me the door." No one responded, Aaron left the table, went to several activity areas, and returned to the table. After a few moments he left the table again, stating that he was going to look for the teacher. He went to the door, opened it, looked out, closed the door, and returned to the room. He then continued to play until Ms. Brown returned at 2:30. Aaron showed her his bag and she opened it. His uneasiness with the classroom environment was unmistakable. Conversely, Alice and Judy, both of whom had been to nursery school, appeared unconcerned.

Aaron further demonstrated his reaction to a new situation at 2:45 in the second classroom. As soon as we

were sitting on the floor Ms. Brown said, "Aaron, can you find the computer?" He glanced around and then pointed to it. When Judy was asked to find the treasure chest Aaron said, "I hope this isn't a game." Ms. Brown asked him, "Why not?" Aaron did not reply but got up and began to walk across the room. Ms. Brown asked him to remain sitting and he did so. The incident was Aaron's first exposure to the circle routine.

Aaron's second circle experience occurred when the students returned to the main classroom at 3:00. (This event was discussed previously in chapter 3.) Ms. Brown asked the students to sit on the outside of the circle. They had not been told the purpose of the circle yet. Aaron sat down but immediately left to play with the abacus. He was called back, he sat down, and then went to the blackboard. When called back again he replied, "I'm not tired." Ms. Brown explained, "Sometimes we have to sit even if we're not tired." She informed the students that she would read a story to them; then they would go outside to play and then they would get on the bus. Aaron remained sitting but did not respond to the story.

Another incident foreshadowed Aaron's assertiveness in his interaction with his peers. The entire incident was over in seconds; nevertheless, it seemed significant. During free activity in the second classroom Aaron took a toy from Alice. She did not protest and the event ended

with Aaron retaining possession. It could be argued that Aaron's assertiveness resulted from not learning appropriate behavior in nursery school. However, the data show that some of the students who had been to nursery school were equally aggressive.

Aaron's reactions to an unfamiliar routine, such as circle, were demonstrated clearly on Day 1. Further, he seemed prepared to indicate verbally and nonverbally that he did not want to participate in the "game" or circle routine. Mainly because of the small size of the class on Day 1, Aaron was not fully exposed to the routines of line-up and tidying until Day 2.

The formalized line-up routine was first initiated at 2:00, on Day 2, when students were asked to line up to go to the gymnasium. Aaron, Alice, and Judy were asked to show the six "new" students how to line up but this demonstration failed to materialize; it appeared that Aaron, Alice, and Judy did not know how to demonstrate lining up. The second line-up occurred when students prepared to go to the second classroom. Just as the line formed, Doug left the room. Ms. Brown left the room to bring him back. While waiting in line Aaron said to me, "I wonder what's happening?" I said, "I don't know, do you?" Aaron replied, "No." Ms. Brown returned in a few moments and we went to the second classroom. It was not clear if Aaron was questioning Doug's departure, the

purpose of the line-up, or both.

Two additional events on Day 2 hinted at Aaron's desire for procedural explanations. The first took place in the gymnasium while we were in circle. Ms. Brown said, "I'm going to roll this ball to someone and call their name and then they can roll it to someone and call their name." Aaron, sitting beside me, said to me, "I wonder what's happening?" I said, "I don't know." The ball was rolled back and forth for a few minutes but no one called out a name. Then, rolling the ball to Aaron, Ms. Brown said, "Roll it to someone and call their name." Aaron replied quietly with head down, "I can't." Ms. Brown said, "Yes, you can." Still with head down Aaron repeated, "I can't." The event ended with a student adjacent to Aaron taking the ball and rolling it across the circle. (Although students had name tags they were not introduced to each other.)

The second event occurred after snack when students were called to circle but had not been told the purpose of this circle yet. While waiting in circle Aaron asked Ms. Brown, "Is it story time?" Ms. Brown replied, "No, I'm going to switch something...we're going to line up to go to the other classroom." I did not have the opportunity to ask Aaron why he thought we might have a story. However, I sensed that Aaron remembered that on the previous day we were asked to sit in a circle because Ms.

Brown was going to read a story to us.

The latter two events, as well as the event during the line-up to go to the second classroom, strongly suggest that Aaron was actively seeking ways to make sense of what was expected of him. No other students were observed asking questions or otherwise making comments related to any of the procedures on Days 1 and 2. As the week progressed several students such as Emily, Mary, Jane, and Craig questioned some procedures. However, Aaron was somewhat unusual because he vocalized his concerns so much.

Aaron soon began to voice his interest in getting out to the playground. On Day 2, when students were again told that they would get out to play, Aaron said to me, "I hope we can get to the swings." By the time we got outside the buses had arrived; therefore, the students did not get to the swings. Aaron was to comment on getting to the swings and monkey bars on Days 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13.

A review of what I consider to be significant events in Aaron's life as a student on Day 2 reveals that he continued to seek explanations for what was happening, refusing to participate in activities that he apparently did not understand. His queries about story time and going to the swings suggest that he was beginning to anticipate what might be going to happen.

Four incidents on Day 3 help to identify Aaron's progression towards becoming socially competent in a junior kindergarten classroom. One event took place when I returned to class at 1:20 on Day 3. Aaron appeared to have been crying. I joined him at the coloring table at 1:30, chatted with him about coloring and the water table, and then asked, "Did you have fun at French today?" Aaron replied, "I didn't say anything." I countered, "Mmmm, you didn't say anything?" Aaron explained, "I didn't know any of them." I continued, "You didn't know any...of the French words?" Instead of answering, Aaron began to talk about coloring. The event was not pursued because I sensed that he did not want to continue the discussion. Nevertheless, Aaron seemed to be indicating, somewhat indirectly and as in the ball-rolling incident, that he was uncomfortable with a routine that he did not understand.

Throughout Day 3 Aaron continued to react to new procedures. For example, the painting area, which accommodated three students, was set up for the first time. When Ms. Brown invited Aaron to paint he replied, "I'll wait 'til everyone else is finished." Subsequent data revealed that this response appeared to be Aaron's way of saying, "I don't know what's happening yet and I want to get comfortable with the new procedure before I participate."

Aaron's reaction to a new circle procedure clearly was evident on Day 3. (Mary's reaction was discussed in chapter 3.) At 2:15 Ms. Brown asked the students to "come to circle for prayer...because that's what we do before we have our snack." Ms. Brown did not insist when Aaron and Mary refused to come to circle. Upon completion of the prayer and dismissal of the students, Ms. Brown spoke to Aaron and Mary, asking them to apologize. Mary did but Aaron appeared not to have apologized. He was then dismissed for snack. I was sitting at a snack table with three students and invited him to join us. After several minutes I asked him what Ms. Brown had said to him. He responded by shrugging his shoulders. Almost immediately he began to talk about his snack. I did not pursue the subject further nor did I ask him why he would not come to circle. However, it can be postulated that a pattern was emerging: When Aaron did not comprehend a procedure, he tended not to participate.

Verbal evidence that Aaron was cognizant of inappropriate behavior in other students first occurred on Day 3. In circle, at 2:55, Doug had persisted in running around the circle. Ms. Brown eventually sat him on her lap and kept him there. A few moments later when he squirmed off her lap Aaron got up, went over to Ms. Brown, and said, "He got away." At the same time Jack said, "Keep him [Doug] away from me." Ms. Brown explained,

"We'll let him go and see if he stays in circle." Aaron and Jack were the first students to refer specifically to Doug's behavior. However, the data show that several students subsequently noticed and remarked on Doug's behavior throughout the observation period. Aaron made additional comments to me about Doug's actions on Days 4, 7, 8, and 9.

By Day 3 the class enrolment was 14, 9 of whom had not been to nursery school. Of those 9, only Aaron, Mary, and Joan exhibited behavior suggesting that they did not understand the role of student yet. Day 3 was the first day for Joan and Mary. Mary's behavior took the form of refusing to come to circle on three occasions. Conversely, with the exception of one line-up routine Joan complied with all procedural requests. As noted in chapter 3, Joan was prepared to get into line; she simply appeared not to understand that she was expected to wait for Ms. Brown. Aaron's behavior on Day 3 seemed to suggest that he no longer articulated his concerns directly regarding what was happening. However, on Day 4 he again began to voice his concerns regarding some procedures.

Four new students arrived on Day 4. Before dismissing students for free activity at 1:20, Ms. Brown asked four "older" (more experienced) students to "show the new students things in the room." When Aaron was

paired with Jim, Aaron said, "I don't know." Ms. Brown replied, "Well, show him what you can, and ask me if you forget." The other three students voiced no concerns regarding Ms. Brown's request. Upon dismissal, Aaron and Jim went in different directions. The remaining three pairs started out together but quickly became involved in separate play. Thus, none of the more experienced students completed their tasks. It seems unlikely that Aaron did not know where things were. Because not one of the students complied with Ms. Brown's request, one might conclude that none of them understood how to accomplish this task. Of particular interest is the fact that Aaron was the only student to articulate his inability to do so. Aaron's desire to know how to do things was again vocalized just as the 1:20 circle dispersed. He had been looking at a new display on the wall and asked Ms. Brown, "How do you make the paper leaves?" Ms. Brown explained and with no further comment from Aaron he went to free activity.

It could be assumed that Aaron understood the tidying routine by Day 4. Nevertheless, I had never seen Aaron tidying up although it is possible that he did this when I was not watching him. When tidy-up was announced on Day 4, Aaron came to sit at my table. As the tidying began, Aaron said, "What's going on here...put the dog back in...tomorrow I guess." I asked him, "What are you going

to do tomorrow?" Instead of answering, he said, "I wonder where the playdough is?" I said, "Did you ask Ms. Brown?" Aaron replied, "It's in the other room...I'm going to ask Ms. Brown if I can color." He did and she replied, "Not right now, honey, it's time to tidy up and get ready for gym." Although Aaron did not color, neither did he tidy. As we were getting into circle Aaron did something that I considered significant: He brought me to circle. Background events that led up to the incident follow.

Prior to Day 4 Aaron had often refused to come to circle or reluctantly sat down at the last minute. Additionally, I usually sat down as soon as two or three students had arrived. Thus, when Aaron arrived at circle on Day 3, there was no space left beside me and he sat in front of me. (Sitting "double" was behavior that experienced students knew ordinarily was not permitted.) The interesting incident occurred on Day 4 when the class was called to circle following tidy-up. I was writing at a table and did not come to circle immediately. I felt a tap on my arm and looked up to see Aaron pointing to the circle, motioning me to sit down. I sat down with Aaron at my side. I did not ask him why he brought me to circle although it became evident that this approach guaranteed him a spot beside me. He repeated this action on Days 8, 9, and 10. His intentions were made abundantly clear on Day 9 when there was no space beside me in circle. As

soon as Emily and Craig moved, Aaron claimed that space, saying, "Now I can be where I want." Towards the end of the observation period he became overtly possessive of this space (a position beside me) and on Day 12 he actually pushed Doug away from me.

Aaron also made an intriguing comment on Day 4. The comment came to be made because of a procedure that I had initiated. The context of the procedure follows: Beginning on Day 1, I had explained to the students that I was in school with them so that I could learn how to be a junior kindergarten student; therefore, I would be writing in a notebook and using a tape recorder. On Day 4 Emily came to me and asked me what I was writing. I said, "I don't want to forget what to do in junior kindergarten, so I write things down...can you tell me some things to remember?" Emily suggested things such as play, cutting, and making things. Aaron arrived during this exchange and I explained what we were doing. He volunteered, "House, hands, bus, box farm, kid, box." There was no opportunity to ask him to expand on his suggestions. Somewhat later, while waiting for a story to begin, I asked Aaron, Kristie, and Judy to tell me some more things to write down. It was at this point that Aaron made his intriguing comment. He said, "Write down my name." Circumstances did not permit me to ask him to explain his reason for having me write down his name.

The incident was fascinating for several reasons. First, no other students, when telling me what to remember about junior kindergarten, ever suggested their names. Second, the data show that an interest in people's names was exhibited by other students. Third, Aaron was to participate in at least three more events involving his name. As previously noted, Aaron's refusal to participate in the ball-rolling game perhaps was partly due to his not knowing the names of the other students, rather than his inability to roll the ball.

Aaron continued to be acutely aware of the possibility of going to the playground. For instance, a specific promise to go to the playground was not given on Day 4, although it was implied during story time when Ms. Brown said, "You might not get out to play because you aren't using your eyes and ears." Shortly thereafter, while lining up at home time, Aaron said to me, "I hope the buses aren't here." I asked him, "Why?" and he replied, "'Cause I want to play with the monkey bars." As we walked out Aaron saw the buses and then veered towards the monkey bars. I did not say anything and continued in the direction of the buses. Aaron followed me. At that moment Doug ran towards the monkey bars. Aaron grasped my hand, pointed to Doug, and said, "He's running away...let's get him." I explained that Doug's brother would bring him back. Aaron hesitated a moment, said,

"OK," and we continued to the bus. His keen desire to get to the playground was unmistakable. With the exception of Doug, no other students were observed expressing a similar passion for the playground.

Because Aaron was absent on Day 5, Day 4 marked the end of his first week in junior kindergarten. Had he been at school he would have experienced several new procedures such as playing outside, playing with playdough, the lights-off technique used by Ms. Brown to gain students' attention, and the altered snack routine. The new snack routine was to be of considerable interest to Aaron. Perhaps coincidentally, on Day 5, during the time previously scheduled for snack, Jane and Heather each asked me where Ms. Brown was. Although I did not ask them why they wanted to know where Ms. Brown was, I surmised that Jane's question stemmed from her noticeable awareness of rules and protocol. Jane's behavior as a student provided an interesting contrast to Aaron.

Jane arrived at school on Day 1. She was 4.5 years old, had attended nursery school and, unlike Aaron, seemingly had already acquired the skills of a socially competent student. For example, on Day 5 she observed that some students left the table without putting away the playdough. Later that day she told Ms. Brown, "It's not time," when two students were snacking before 2:15. In sharp contrast to Aaron, Jane consistently lined up,

tidied, came to circle, snacked in designated areas, and readily participated in group activities. She rarely appeared confused or uncomfortable about any school routines. In other words, after one day of school Jane already fitted the role of student, whereas Aaron, after four days of school, did not appear to have learned this role yet. Arguably, he may have learned it but chose not to conform or demonstrate his knowledge of social interaction. Aaron's second week at school brought more new procedures. He continued to resist participation in activities that he seemed not to understand, navigating the road of social competence with considerable caution.

Week 2

On Monday of the second week of school (Day 6) Ms. Brown introduced roll call, asking students to reply "here" when their names were called. Aaron, as well as several other students, did not reply. Ms. Brown did not insist on a reply when students hesitated to answer. Aaron said "here" only once (on Day 9) during the remainder of the observation period and that was said so quietly that Ms. Brown asked him to repeat it. He refused to repeat it.

Aaron also refused to participate in the gymnasium activity. When called to line up for gym, Aaron took my hand and led me to the line-up. Upon arrival in the gymnasium the students spread out, noisily running and

Jumping. Aaron immediately moved into a corner. The class was called to circle but Aaron would not come. Ms. Brown called him but as he still would not come, Ms. Brown went over to him, speaking quietly. She returned without him. Ms. Brown then took some balls and, rolling them to every second student, told them to share the ball with the person next to them. Ms. Brown named Jim as Aaron's partner. Aaron came to the circle to stand beside his partner. However, when the students were dismissed to "do what you want with the ball," Aaron returned to the corner and did not participate. Jim played with the ball by himself. The activity continued until the class lined up to return to the classroom. While in the line-up I asked Aaron if he played with a ball during the activity. He replied, "No" and when I asked, "Why not?" he said, "I wanted to wait a while." It appeared that, once again, Aaron did not understand what was expected of him and rather than participate submissively, he elected to watch and wait. Later in the day I initiated a discussion with him about not playing with the ball but as he did not respond to my query, I did not persist in my questioning.

Aaron's attitude towards tidying was becoming rather obvious by Day 6. Pattern analysis reveals a predictable course of action by Aaron. His occupation with snack and crafts during tidying was discussed briefly in chapter 3. To review: At 2:45 Ms. Brown announced that tidy-up time

would be followed by a story and playground. When I asked Aaron if he was going to tidy up he said he had not had his snack. Given that he was absent on Day 5 when the snack routine was changed, one can empathize with Aaron's concern about snack. However, instead of attempting to eat his snack, he went to the playdough table. After a few moments I asked him if he was tidying up. He said, "No." When I asked him why, he replied, "I have to make something." (He was pushing a pencil into a ball of playdough.) Aaron did not tidy and furthermore found a means to avoid tidying for the duration of the observation period. It is reasonable to assume that by Day 6 Aaron fully comprehended what was expected of him during tidy-up. Because I never asked Aaron directly why he did not tidy, I can only speculate that he simply did not want to do it.

Aaron's apparent assertiveness also was evident when he brought his snack to story circle. As noted in chapter 3, Aaron was the first student to initiate this action. The action may have been prompted by his realization that if he did not have his snack then, he might never have it. Other students had apparently not determined yet what the procedure was for the new snack routine. Consequently, when Aaron was given permission to sit at a nearby table and snack during the story, Jim also remembered that he had not had his snack and was permitted to sit with Aaron.

In effect, Aaron's action created a pattern of students snacking during circle activites.

Aaron's pattern of expressing his desire to go to the playground was firmly established by Day 6. On Day 6, when Ms. Brown announced that the class would go out to play after letters were distributed, Aaron said to me, "We don't want to miss all this fun." However, upon leaving the school Aaron saw the buses and said, "Oh no, we won't get to play on the monkey bars." Aaron got to the playground once (on Day 10) during the observation period.

Previous to Day 7 Aaron was not observed playing "with" his peers. Although he appeared to be engaged in an activity with other students, he was playing by himself. Furthermore, he seemed to ensure that he remained alone. For example, in separate events, on Day 6, Kristie and Doug joined Aaron at an activity. However, Aaron soon left for another part of the room. Three events, on Day 7, marked the beginning of a change in this behavior. The first event occurred when Aaron and Mary were pushing a large pillow into the base of the climber. The second event took place at the climber with Craig. At one point when Craig directed Aaron to get off the climber he did but immediately got back on and they played cooperatively for several minutes. The third event involved Mary again. On that occasion they were

pretending to shoot each other with a toy drill.

Aaron continued, on Day 7, to signify indirectly his need to understand what was happening. For instance, while Aaron was at the puzzle table Ms. Brown brought Marvin, Craig, and Jim to a table and gave them some coloring to do (she told me that they had been too noisy). After about 10 minutes Craig left the table and began playing with the large blocks. I moved to that area, sat down and observed. When Aaron arrived he said to me, "I wonder what they're working here?" (referring to the two boys still at the coloring table). I said I did not know, suggesting that we ask Craig. Craig said, "They're making books from...with lots of people in them." Aaron soon left. I did not ask Aaron why he wanted to know what the boys were doing. It was unlikely that he did not know that they were coloring. Rather, he probably had seen Ms. Brown bring them to the table and wondered why they were there.

An event in circle suggested that Aaron was attempting to determine what kinds of behavior were permitted. Sitting beside me, Aaron said, "I'm thirsty." Martha, sitting nearby, said, "Get a drink." Aaron replied, "Not wet." This event was similar to his previous behavior of waiting to paint and waiting to play in the gymnasium. He did not mention getting a drink in circle again until Day 12 when he spoke directly to Ms.

Brown who allowed him to get a drink.

Aaron was likewise exploring other limits. When returning from the coatroom on Day 8, he pushed once on the piano keys even though the class had been told that the piano was not to be played by the students. He also probably knew that students should not take toys from each other. Nevertheless, when Aaron joined Craig and Janine in a play area he took Craig's toy. Craig said, "Look who's taking that" but did not attempt to retrieve it. Instead, he promptly took Janine's toy. She did not object and immediately found two other toys. The entire event was over in a few seconds.

Although Ms. Brown introduced show and tell on Day 8, it would be Day 10 before the students were fully prepared to participate. Aaron clearly had no previous experience with show and tell. Incidents on Days 9, 1, and 13 provided insights into how he was attempting to understand the new procedure.

When Ms. Brown announced show and tellon Day 9, she reminded students to use their "eyes and ears"--meaning they were not to touch the item being shown. Mary said, "I do," and Aaron said, "So do I." This comment marked the first time that Aaron had involved himself voluntarily in formal group interaction. He appeared t want to be part of show and tell but did not understan the rules (possibly, in part, because they had not been fully

explained yet). Only students with previous show and tell experience participated. Thus, Martha was showing her item when Aaron left the circle and picked up a toy from a nearby shelf. When Ms. Brown asked him if he had something for show and tell, he held up the toy, then put it back and sat down. Even though the class had not been told specifically that items did not come from the classroom, it appeared that Aaron somehow recognized that show and tell items did not come from school supplies.

Aaron continued to act assertively and explore the limits of acceptable behavior on Day 9. In the course of the day he successfully wrestled the water-table plug from Doug, told Ms. Brown that Doug had opened the sand box, used glue at the coloring table (which was not permitted), refused to share paper with Susan, left the line up to play in the kitchen, and left circle to see if the buses had arrived. With the exception of the latter incident Ms. Brown either did not see the incident or elected to make no comment.

By the end of the second week Aaron appeared to have taken some tentative steps along the road towards increased social interaction with his peers. He had begun to interact with other students and imitate their behavior. At the same time, he continued to test the limits of appropriate behavior and to seek explanations for what was happening. The final week of observation saw

Aaron expand his social interaction and imitative behavior. However, his apparent need to prepare himself for participation in group activities persisted.

Week 3

It was noted that on Day 3 Aaron's behavior suggested that he was uncomfortable with the French class. His attitude to French was vocalized to me again on Day 10. In first circle Aaron said to me, "I hope we don't play French." I asked him why and he replied, "I don't like it." I queried him about what he did in French but because his attention was diverted, the topic was not pursued. However, a few moments later Aaron said, "I think we will play French." I asked him how he knew we would play French and he answered, "I hear steps in the hall." Because Aaron was smiling as he said this one could assume that he was not particularly upset about "playing French." In retrospect, it appears that Aaron was preparing himself for a significant step towards participation in French that he was to take on Day 14. (This step is discussed below.)

Aaron left circle three times on Day 10, all during the last circle of the day. On the first occasion, as circle activities were slow to begin, he got up, found a tow and returned to circle. Shortly thereafter, when Dave turned off the lights Aaron got up and joined him at the light switch. Ms. Brown directed them back to circle.

When Aaron returned, "his" spot beside me was taken by Susan. Aaron immediatedly left circle again, going to play with the parking lot toy. Ms. Brown directed him back to circle. By this time Susan had moved to another spot. Aaron sat beside me and stayed there for the duration of circle.

Additional imitative actions occurred as the class lined up to go to the playground. While Ms. Brown was out of the room Martha and Alice began playing a game with me that involved my guessing who was standing behind me. When that game concluded I became aware of something touching my foot. It was Aaron "tickling" my foot. We played this "game" for a few moments. While the students waited for the intercom announcements, Jim began playfully pushing other students. Marvin and Mary joined in, followed soon thereafter by Aaron. When the announcements were concluded the pushing stopped and the class went to the playground.

Aaron's overt classroom interaction with the other children began to flourish on Day 11. Aaron was observed walking around the room arm-in-arm with Craig. It was the first time for this kind of behavior and I did not know who initiated it. Of particular interest is the fact that Aaron did not terminate this activity. He also played with Jim, jumping off a small ledge in the book corner.

A small, but significant event occurred on Day 11

when show and tell was part of circle activities again. As Ms. Brown explained the procedure, Aaron left my side, crossed the circle, sat near Ms. Brown, and stayed there until she completed the explanation and show and tell was over. Because Aaron had never willingly given up his spot beside me, I was curious about this event. Aaron repeated this action on Days 12, 13, and 14. On Day 12, as Ms. Brown explained a new craft in circle, Aaron left my side and sat near Ms. Brown until the class was dismissed for free activity. In circle for show and tell on Day 13, Aaron left my side and sat beside Ms. Brown. It was his day for show and tell but he had not brought anything. As soon as Ms. Brown called his name he told her he did not have anything and immediately returned to sit beside me. It was on Day 14 that Aaron took what appeared to be a significant big step towards assuming the role of student in French. In the 12:55 circle, he left my side and sat beside the chair usually occupied by Ms. White. He did not return to my side. When French was over at 1:20 I asked Ms. White if Aaron had sat beside her in French. She replied that he had, volunteering that he was "very shy" and "took part for the first time today." Aaron's decision to move away from his preferred spot near me and into Ms. Brown's or Ms. White's territory seemed to occur each time that he was preparing himself for participation in an activity.

In the final week of observation, Aaron's social competence, assertiveness, and self-confidence increasingly manifested itself in numerous events. He began to snack in nondesignated areas on Day 11. It was noted in chapter 3 that several students occasionlly snacked in nondesignated areas. However, only Aaron did this consistently from Day 11 to Day 14. Aaron interacted with other students with increasing frequency. As already noted, he played with Craig and Jim. On Day 12 he imitated Jim's pushing behavior again, outmaneuvered Martha for possession of a chair, left the line-up to follow Doug to the door, and pushed Doug away from me when he attempted to sit beside me in circle.

Days 13 and 14 saw Aaron voluntarily interact for extended periods with his peers during free activity. On Day 13, Aaron, Jim, Marvin, and Bob created an extensive road with the large blocks. As other students began to play nearby, Aaron said to them, "Don't wreck it guys...stop it you guys." When Doug started to kick the road Aaron began to push him away. During this pushing Aaron glanced over to Ms. Brown but did not call her. Within several minutes Ms. Brown called Doug to her side and Aaron resumed his play. On Day 14, Aaron, Craig, and Judy were building a similar road. When Doug approached the road Aaron immediately pushed him away. Craig, certain that Doug was going to destroy the road, began

calling loudly, "Teacher, teacher." As Aaron also began to call, "Teacher, teacher," Chris said, "Let's run and get her...teacher, Doug is breaking the road." Ms. Brown diverted Doug to another activity and Aaron and Craig continued to play cooperatively. Shortly thereafter, Allen arrived and began building his own road. When Allen turned away to speak with another student Aaron removed a large piece from Allen's road. Noticing that a piece was missing, Allen said, "Who messed up this part?" I indicated that I did not know. Allen said, "I can fix it" and promptly took a piece from Aaron's road. Whereupon, Aaron took the piece from Allen and Allen took it back. Allen seemed amused by the exchange but Aaron appeared quite concerned. As this exchange took place, some students started walking on Aaron's road. He left Allen to chase the students from his road.

Aaron's overt desire to know what was happening surfaced again in several events on Days 13 and 14. When Ms. Brown investigated Judy's crying on Day 13, Aaron followed Ms. Brown across the room. When he returned he said, "I wanted to know what's happening." Two events occurred in circle. First, Emily left circle to look out the window. Aaron immediately got up, pushed a chair to the window and looked out. He then returned to circle. The second event took place when Ms. Brown was handing out stickers to students who had listened. (This event also was

discussed in chapter 3.) While waiting for Ms. Brown to progress around the circle, Aaron said to me, "When will it be our turn?...I hope it's not home time." An incident on Day 14 occured at 12:45. Student helpers, sitting on the floor, were cutting out articles for the day's craft. As Aaron watched them he said, "I wonder how they are going to clean up the mess...I wonder when they are going to clean up here."

The imitative characteristic of Aaron and other students was clearly demonstrated on Day 13. Students were in circle just prior to home line-up. When Doug ran out of the room and Ms. Brown left to retrieve him, Marvin went to the doorway and looked down the hallway. Approximately half the class, including Aaron, turned towards the door. Almost immediately Marvin hissed, "Here she comes, here she comes...get back, get back." When Ms. Brown returned with Doug, the entire class was sitting in a perfect circle. In a matter of seconds, Doug left again, Ms. Brown went after him, and the previous scenario was repeated. Aside from the phenomenon of the imitative behavior, one wonders where and when Marvin learned how to "round the block" and how it happened that all the students immediately reacted to Marvin's direction.

Although Aaron had increased his social interaction with other students by Day 19, he still appeared

uncomfortable in group situations. Thus, at the end of Day 14 when students were playing with the playdough and plastic animals that I had given them, Aaron did not participate. Instead, he stayed close to Ms. Brown who read a story to him.

Aaron had traveled a long way from the novice student who avoided group activities and did not understand circle routine to the student who found the courage to participate in French and build roads with fellow students. His journey is not complete but he has taken some giant steps towards becoming a full-fledged student. Aaron did not travel alone in those first weeks. He had teachers and peers who helped him, supported him, and affected the way in which he became a student. I was also a fellow student who interacted with Aaron and his peers. The extent to which I may have affected the environment of these students was discussed in chapter 2.

It is easy occasionally to lose sight of the fact that it is the behavior of very young children that is being discussed. Junior kindergartners' perceptions and actions may appear so mature that researchers and educators periodically are surprised when these boys and girls act in ways that are appropriate to their age. Learning to act like a student is no easy task. Although Aaron may be somewhat unusual in demonstrating overtly his intense desire to know what's happening, it is not

unreasonable to surmise that he personifies what many preschoolers do not articulate: Junior kindergartners need and deserve a clear idea of how they are expected to act as socially competent students. Conclusions and implications arising from analysis of Aaron's and other students' behavior are presented in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study investigated the development of social competence in novice junior kindergarten students during the first three weeks of school. Data collected from observations of classroom interaction were analysed within the framework of five major routines: circle, line-up, tidying, snack time, and free activities. This chapter presents conclusions and implications originating from data analyses.

Conclusions and implications are limited to students whose behavior was closely monitored and are based on the assumption that, to a significant degree, becoming a student entails developing social competence in classroom interaction. Children at St. John's School usually are considered to be socially competent when they are polite and relatively quiet; when they share, do not fight or otherwise pose a threat to themselves or fellow students; and when they listen to and follow directions associated with the day's routine. In other words, the children are socially competent when they learn to behave appropriately in the school environment.

It is generally acknowledged that most children quickly learn to become socially competent students. Therefore, this study did not investigate <u>if</u> novice junior kindergartners learn to adapt to the role of student. Nor

did the study address the issue of whether junior kindergartners should develop social competence. My observations confirm the view that children are not merely passive recipients in the socialization process. Nevertheless, the reality is that they must learn the rules of appropriate behavior and conform to most of these rules if they are to survive in school (Barnes, 1985; Delamont, 1983; Fischer et al., 1984). Rather than investigate the "power" (Delamont, 1983, p. 27) relationship between the teacher and students, this study examined the process, from the students' perspective, whereby some junior kindergarten children became acclimatized to the role of student; that is, how they reacted to, described, interpreted, and understood classroom events in the first three weeks of their lives as students. Observing these children contributes knowledge to how junior kindergartners acquire social competence and provides valuable insights into the raison d'ĉtre and meaning of novice students' behavior.

This study confirms the findings of several researchers: Young children are more perceptive and complex than we often assume (Davies, 1982); preschoolers are able to demonstrate an understanding of school processes, thereby providing meaningful data (Corsaro, 1981; Jackson, 1987; Klein et al., 1988; Reifel, 1988; Willes, 1981); students' intrepretations of events and

incidents are useful tools with which to evaluate pedagogical effectiveness (Hammersley & Woods, 1984; Paley, 1986); a broader understanding of the effect of formal education on preschoolers must come through consideration of what the students themselves experience and think (Genishi, 1979; Paley, 1986); and the study of initial classroom encounters presents a unique view of the way in which children make sense of school (Ball, 1984; Florio, 1979; Shultz, 1979; Shultz & Florio, 1979; Willes, 1981).

Data analyses yielded two central conclusions regarding the manner in which junior kindergartners at St. John's Separate School became bona fide students. First, except for infrequent, minor incidents, all the students appeared to enjoy their initial early school experience. Second, students' reluctance and occasional outright refusal to conform to prescribed routines seem to be closely correlated to insufficient procedural information as well as an urge to test rules. This chapter focuses on the latter conclusion together with the educational implications of this conclusion.

What students do not do is quite as significant as what they are prepared to do. Therefore, when students appear to choose not to conform to prescribed routines, it is useful to consider the possible reasons for this nonconformist behavior. Three general patterns of student

nonconformity have been identified: nonconformity as the inability to perform; nonconformity as rule testing; and nonconformity as preparation for participation. These are discussed below.

Nonconformity as Inability to Perform

Students' seemingly perverse refusal to participate in various activities in a socially competent manner was manifested in a combination of verbal, nonverbal, explicit, and implicit behavioral occurrences. For example, Mary and Aaron were very explicit when they elected not to come to prayer circle, although they did not verbalize their intentions.

Aaron's unwillingness to participate in the ball-rolling game, on Day 2, marked the first time that he articulated his inability to comply with a request from Ms. Brown. When he said, "I can't" (roll the ball and name a student), it is implausible that he neither understood the procedure of rolling the ball, nor that he did not want to roll it. His behavior suggested that because he did not know the names of the other students, he genuinely could not do what was asked of him. Although none of the remaining eight students explicitly stated that they would not play the game, their tacit intention could be inferred from the fact that most of them did not participate. Martha and Marvin, who knew each other before coming to school, were the only students who

appeared actually to play the game. Viewed in isolation, the ball-rolling incident could be seen as an example of eight children deciding to be uncooperative. However, they appeared to have little choice. If they had possessed the necessary tools with which to operate in a socially competent manner, they most likely would have conformed to the procedure of playing the game.

In the incident described above, the tools required to be able to function in an acceptable fashion as a student were the names of fellow students. Tools also can take the form of knowledge related to the meaning of a procedure. For example, when the new procedure of prayer circle was introduced, on Day 3, even with urging, Aaron and Mary refused to join the circle. This was Mary's first day at school and she had not attended nursery school. Earlier in the day she twice had asked, "Why?" when directed to come to circle. Thus, it is likely that she was not familiar with any aspects of circle routine and, furthermore, could not recognize the purpose of prayer circle. After his initial hesitation to participate in circle procedures on Day 1, Aaron had begun to conform regularly. However, like Mary, he appeared unable to make any sense of the new routine and, therefore, would not participate. Aaron's frequent query of "what's happening?" seems to epitomize the conundrum facing some junior kindergartners. These

3-and-4-year-olds are at an age when they tend to conform in order to avoid the consequences of inappropriate behavior. However, especially during the first weeks of school, these children frequently are expected to participate in what may be for them, new and unusual activities. If, for whatever reasons, they do not understand what is happening around them, it takes an act of courage to "stand up" to an authority figure and ask for an explanation.

While Aaron and Mary's refusal to conform might be seen as simply being contrary, it is more probable that insufficient information about what they were supposed to do overrode the pressure to participate submissively in a procedure whose purpose they seemed not to comprehend. It cannot be assumed that all the remaining students who came to circle understood the purpose of prayer circle. Instead, it is reasonable to infer that, unlike Aaron and Mary, those students who may not have understood the procedure were not sufficiently motivated to defy openly Ms. Brown's authority.

Similarly, it cannot be assumed that Aaron was the only student, on Day 4, who did not know how to show a fellow student around the classroom. One of four students paired with new students for the purpose of familiarizing them with the classroom, Aaron was the only student to say, "I don't know." Ms. Brown responded, "Show him what

you can and ask me if you forget." She apparently assumed that Aaron did not know where things were located. Because Aaron was experiencing his fourth day at school it is improbable that he did not know where things were. It is far more feasible that he did not know how to go about showing another student around the room. This explanation is substantiated by the ensuing actions of the other three students. Although these students did not articulate any reservations about performing the requested task, nevertheless, they did not show their partners around the room. The seeming reluctance of the four experienced students to comply with Ms. Brown's request need not be interpreted as an aversion from acting in a socially competent manner but rather as a condition in which they lacked the necessary tools to execute a procedure. Unless junior kindergartners perceive a request for action as meaningless or irrational, they appear quite willing to conform. When they resist, it may be, very simply, because they are unable to make sense of the procedure.

Most of the observed junior kindergartners did not articulate their reasons for not conforming. Furthermore, most of the students would go through the motions of participating even though their subsequent behavior suggested that they did not understand how to perform the desired action. Therefore, Aaron was the only student to demonstrate explicitly and nonverbally his apparent

inability to make sense of the ball-sharing game on Day 6. When Ms. Brown directed the students to share a ball with a partner and "do what you want," Aaron retreated to a corner of the gymnasium. Once again, his disinclination to participate appeared to stem from insufficient information regarding what he was expected to do. Although the remaining students appeared to participate because they remained standing, in fact, many of them stood around looking confused: They seemed not to know how to share the ball. Thus, they implicitly seemed to be saying, "Help--we're doing the best we can but we really don't know what we're supposed to be doing."

Implications

Data analyses show that junior kindergartners experience considerable difficulties in assuming the role of student when they lack the information required to make sense of and execute a procedure. Educators can facilitate children's socialization to the world of school by acting upon the students' need to be fully apprised of procedural expectations. Children's attitudes towards school can be affected negatively if they are expected to perform tasks and are inadequately prepared for them.

Fogel (1980), discussing the role of emotion in early childhood education, cautions that:

> any novel situation, and in particular a situation in which new information and ideas are

> being presented, may evoke strong emotional reactions ranging from excitement to fear. These reactions, and the way in which they are handled by the teacher, may influence learning and retention. (p. 2)

Fogel suggests that classroom emotional experiences could have a profound effect on the outcomes of education. Elkind (1986) goes a step further. He maintains that if preschool experiences create a sense of inadequacy and uncertainty, children might be prompted to avoid participation and involvement in subsequent school (and even life) experiences. Educators would be well advised, Genishi (1979) recommends, to put themselves in the position of a novice student in order to determine if behavior expectations are realistic. Furthermore, because junior kindergartners' communication skills are not fully developed, it is imperative that educators carefully observe and listen to what preschoolers say and do. As Shultz and Florio (1979) note, communicating in an unambiguous manner with these children helps them to help themselves adapt to the role of student.

Additionally, practitioners might consider re-evaluating the definition of a "problem" student. The temptation exists to label children like Aaron and Mary as problem or difficult students because their refusal to comply is so explicit. However, if one accepts that their

nonconformist behavior arises from legitimate sources, then Mary and Aaron are acting in a responsible, socially competent manner. There exists, however, the long-established practice of rewarding compliant behavior, which implicitly encourages passive conformity in beginning students. Conforming, even when students do not know to what they are conforming, is not necessarily desirable behavior.

Nonconformity as Rule Testing

A second pattern of nonconformity concerns students seeking ways to avoid performing within the limits of established rules. In this situation, the students have sufficient information to understand what they are expected to do and although aware of the rules, they elect to go beyond the limits of permitted behavior. Nonconformity associated with procedural rules was observed in all the major routines.

As previously discussed, students (and particularly Aaron) studiously avoided tidying up. However, when Ms. Brown solicited students' participation in tidying, they did not refuse to cooperate. Since it can be reasonably assumed that after several days at school most of the students understood the tidying routine, inadequate information about performance expectations was not likely to be the source of their unwillingness to conform. A plausible explanation is that even though junior

kindergartners understand and accept the logic of some rules, they, like adults, simply do not enjoy tidying up, and will seek ways to avoid performing tasks such as tidying. Nevertheless, with occasional urging, all the observed students cleaned up when requested to do so. This cooperative behavior suggests that in situations where students fully understand what they are supposed to do, they are unmotivated to persist in nonconformist behavior. Interestingly, during a conversation with Ms. Brown held three months after my observations, she indicated that Aaron continued to balk at tidying, saying, "I'd really rather not." However, upon request he would involve himself in the routine.

Testing the limits of snack-time rules became evident after the routine was changed in the second week. Here, examples of inappropriate behavior were: eating in nondesignated areas, remaining at the snack table too long, and failure to put away snack kits. As in the tidying routine, students would readily accede to Ms. Brown's directions to follow prescribed rules. An outright refusal to alter inappropriate behavior was never observed.

Similarly, except for Aaron and Mary's behavior in the first days of school, students readily came to circle and line-up. However, once in circle or line-up, some students would occasionally leave. Their leaving appeared

to be directly related to a delay in the proceedings. Nevertheless, when asked by Ms. Brown to return, they complied with the request.

Infractions of accepted behavioral norms in free activity routines were infrequent (except for Doug, who was an exceptional case) and mainly related to sharing, speaking politely, running in the classroom, and "wrecking" something that someone had created. Breaches of free-activity rules usually occurred in the excitement of an activity. Invariably, students modified their behavior when requested. By Day 7, all the students appeared to possess enough information regarding appropriate free-activity behavior to know what was or was not expected of them.

Implications

The pattern of nonconformity as a means to evade performing in an expected manner suggests that these junior kindergartners seek ways to test and explore the limits of established rules. This exploration seems to allow students to retain a sense of control in their lives while they go through the process of determining their position in the role of student. This approach does not openly defy authority, as in the case of Aaron and Mary who refused to come to prayer circle, nor is it a matter of not understanding what is required, as in the case of the ball-sharing game. Rather, it seems to be a method

whereby, with some impunity and safety from severe repercussions, junior kindergartners are able to practice some decision-making skills.

Studies at the preschool level rarely investigate the students' rationale for noncompliance with rules. However, Doyle (1986) observes that "even in the early elementary grades, some students are able to mask nonproductive time by faking involvement and concealing actions teachers are likely to reprimand" (p. 420). Research in the senior elementary grades shows that students test rules for several reasons. For instance, Ball (1984) found that students test teachers in order to determine what behavior is acceptable, whereas Beynon (1984) concludes that students test rules as a means of establishing peer relationships.

The literature suggests that most junior kindergarten educators are aware of children's seemingly natural instinct to test rule limits. This behavior, coupled with junior kindergartners' proclivity for imitating, may appear to work against the development of social competence. Nevertheless, if imitated behavior is within the boundaries of established rules, children can become acclimatized to the role of student more quickly. Conversely, they may also learn unacceptable behavior. In this study I found that preschoolers are extremely observant and are cognizant of rule infractions that

receive no sanctioning action. Under these conditions, students receive the contradictory message that although they are expected to conform to rules of interaction, nonconformity is occasionally permitted. This inconsistency does not appear to facilitate the process of becoming a student. Where a class has a high pupil to adult ratio, it is unrealistic to expect the teacher to address every rule infraction. Nonetheless, if children experience formal school for the first time in an atmosphere of inconsistent rule enforcement, an attitude towards school may be established that remains with the students for many years. The implication for the education system is that lower pupil to adult ratios are essential for adequately introducing junior kindergartners to expected student behavior.

Nonconformity as Preparation for Participation

Data analyses indicate that inexperienced junior kindergartners probably are attempting to make sense of procedures long before they are seen voluntarily to initiate action. Upon close observation, students appear to send out subtle messages that presage significant steps they are preparing to take towards assuming the role of student. They are inclined to interact in a socially competent manner once they understand a procedure and feel comfortable with it. In these cases, nonconformity may be seen as a tactic for delaying interaction until students

feel secure and confident with their participation in an activity. In the meantime, their resistance to immediate conformity could be erroneously attributed to obstinacy.

Aaron's reaction to the ball-sharing game could be considered an example of obstinate behavior. However, with no nursery school experience, he clearly was unfamiliar with the ball-sharing type of interaction. Aaron's explanation for why he did not play ("I wanted to wait a while") can reasonably be taken to mean that he first needed to watch the procedure and learn the rules before he felt secure enough to become involved. Aaron's delaying tactic is not atypical of novice junior kindergartners. What may be atypical is the degree to which Aaron articulated his reservations. Although other students sought procedural explanations (for example, Jane, Mary, Emily, Craig, and Allen), their comments were less frequent. However, it should be remembered that my attention was focused on Aaron. Therefore, similar behavior by other students may have occurred but gone unobserved.

Depending on the expected behavior, some novice students appear to need more time than others to acquire a sense of how to participate as a student. Some children seem to delay interaction and thus conformity in order to prepare themselves for an activity. Aaron's behavior indicated that he was not always prepared to plunge

directly into an activity. For instance, his rejection of the invitation to paint on Day 3 ("I'll wait 'til everyone is finished") could be seen as being extremely polite. However, analyses of the data revealed patterns suggesting that Aaron needed to discover the operational aspects of a procedure before he felt confident enough to take action. It was not that he was unfamiliar with painting (he indicated that he painted at home) but rather he was not familiar with the painting procedure in the classroom. Students who had attended nursery school, where this routine is similar, probably would not experience the same degree of unfamiliarity and would be less hesitant to participate.

Aaron's reaction, on Day 6, to Martha's advice that he get a drink while in circle again shows how a novice student will delay action until a sense of the accepted protocol has been determined. When he said, "Not yet," his remark did not necessarily mean that he was not thirsty enough but, more likely, that he had not determined yet if it was appropriate to ask for a drink. Further, when he stated, "I'm thirsty," he did not address this to Ms. Brown. Rather, his comment resembled thinking out loud. By Day 12, he apparently felt sufficiently confident of his understanding of circle routine to ask Ms. Brown directly for a drink.

Aaron employed other methods to lay the foundation

for future interaction. During the first two weeks of school he clearly wanted to be near me in circle and line-up, eventually becoming overtly protective of this space. Thus, it was unusual that, on Day 11, he began leaving my side in circle, although he would soon return. Even more unusual (on Day 14) was his failure to return to my side after he left for a spot near the French teacher's chair. According to Ms. White, Day 14 marked the first time that Aaron participated in the French lesson. Viewed in isolation, the event suggests that, seemingly in a spontaneous manner, he decided finally to assume the role of French student. In other words, Aaron's participation "switch" was off for 13 days and then on Day 14 was turned on. This on/off scenario does not accurately reflect the way that children become students. The data indicate that Aaron was not operating in an on/off mode but rather in the manner of a dimmer switch. Aaron's switch was barely activated when he told me on Day 3, "I didn't know any of them [French words]."

A formidable obstacle confronted Aaron on the road to developing social competence in French class: He had no previous exposure to either French or to 20 minutes of formal (structured) teaching. Although presumably he quickly became aware that students were expected to repeat French words, his unfamiliarity with the new routine prompted him to delay or postpone participation and may

explain why Ms. White described Aaron as shy. Even though I could not know everything that Aaron was thinking from Day 4 to Day 9 regarding French lessons, it can be reasonably surmised that he was gradually preparing himself for eventual participation. For instance, even though telling me on, Day 10, "I hope we don't play French...[because] I don't like it," when he realized that he would have French, he appeared to accept the fact in good humor. In a manner of speaking, Aaron was getting ready to bring his participation light up to full intensity. Aaron's behavior in the 12:55 circle, on Day 14, leaves little doubt that he was consciously planning to interact in French class. To make that interaction less intimidating, Aaron did what he had done in previous similar situations--he sat near the teacher's chair. This time he did not return to my side, for to do so meant someone else might get the preferred space near Ms. White.

Aaron's behavior suggests that he was postponing participation until he felt secure enough to assume the role of French student. It is reasonable to surmise that he was struggling to understand the procedure so that eventually, with some sense of security and integrity, he could comfortably participate in French. While it is not possible to know exactly what went on in Aaron's head previous to his overt participation in the French lesson,

it is not reasonable to think that his thought processes pertaining to French were off until Day 14 when they were suddenly turned on.

Implications

Aaron's behavior provided a unique view of the process whereby a child prepares himself to act like a student. Although other students were not observed in similar detail going through their stages of preparation, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that many first-time students experience similar stages of development. Some aspects of students' behavior may lead an observer to conclude that novice junior kindergartners develop social competence in an on/off fashion. What is not always observable or apparent is students' ongoing implicit preparation to perform the courageous act of becoming a student.

Educators can facilitate children's transition into the role of student by carefully monitoring the manner in which children delay their involvement in classroom procedures. While it is not always clear why some children select nonconformist behavior, it is important to understand that most junior kindergartners need some "breathing space" between exposure to a procedure and their demonstration of social competence in that procedure. Some children, particularly those without nursery school experience, may require more time and

information before they begin to take on the role of socially competent students. The urge to rush them into this role may foster a sense of inadequacy and reluctance to interact that could negatively affect subsequent years of schooling. For example, during the first days of school, pressuring children to praticipate in new procedures that they feel uncomfortable doing may create a conscious or subconscious negative feeling towards new situations. This is surely not a desirable attitude to foster in very young children as they embark on their educational journey.

Summary

Observing junior kindergartners during the first three weeks of school yielded data that provide insight into how these children react to and understand events and incidents that occur while they are adapting to the role of student. Attention focused on Aaron who had not attended nursery school or a similar preschool environment. In this respect he fairly represented a first-time student. An attempt was made to understand the process of becoming a socially competent student from the child's perspective. To that end I observed Aaron closely and engaged him in as much conversation as conditons permitted. Conclusions are based on pattern analysis of data arising from the children's verbal and nonverbal behavior. Due to the nature of this behavior,

interpretations of students' actions frequently were based on only a few words such as "what's happening" or a gesture such as a shove.

Children's acclimatization to the role of student is shown to be associated with conforming to prescribed routines. Nonconformity to these routines may be an indication, not of a child's incompetence, but of researchers' and educators' failure to consider what preschoolers think and feel. The initial school experiences of 3-to-5-year-olds may have life-long effects on their attitudes toward themselves and others. The implication for educators and researchers is clear: Assess the congruence between what is planned for educational programs and what preschoolers actually experience. In other words, observe children closely in order to see how they react to the school environment to which they are exposed.

Implications for Further Research

Substantive and methodological implications for further research may be drawn from this study. Substantively, further research is required to expand the limited knowledge available about how young children perceive their early school experiences. Preschoolers' verbal and nonverbal communication provides valuable insight into why children behave the way they do in school and the possible effects of teaching methods and

curriculum on these children.

Methodologically, further use of participant observation will enhance our capacity to uncover the inner thoughts and feelings of very young children as they are transformed into students. A useful approach to exposing their thoughts is to observe what the children do and to engage them in conversations about what they have experienced. The researcher must encounter an event as well as solicit the students' interpretations of the event in order to formulate valid conclusions about children's scool experiences.

Because junior kindergartners talk when they want to, the researcher may think that many encounters provide little data. However, preschoolers do provide valuable data if one listens attentively and is patient. Since teachers are primarily involved with class management, students do not always have the opportunity to share their thoughts with teachers. The presence of a researcher who is always available to the students may encourage preschoolers to divulge important data about what they are experiencing. Once the children accept the observer as an equal (and this seems to occur quickly when they believe that you are genuinely seeking information), they become open and frank with their comments.

In retrospect, I believe I could have asked more questions of the observed children. For instance, asking

students why only three were allowed at the water table or asking why we were not permitted to sit double in circle might have produced intriguing responses from the children. I did not ask these questions because of my worry that these kinds of questions could influence the student's attitude towards Ms. Brown and classroom rules. A concern not to affect the flow of activities caused me to err on the side of caution. Further research using participant observation as a data-collecting technique will contribute to the refinement of this method as a way of collecting meaningful data from preschoolers.

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APPENDIX A

SELECTED DATA

Samples of summary observations and tape transcriptions are provided here. Both are from the fourth day of the first week of school. Summary observations are based on field notes. High-inference descriptors are differentiated from low-inference descriptors by enclosure in ***. Field notes were logged continuously each day. However, because each day's notes are quite lengthy, only one-half day of data is provided. The sample of tape transcriptions covers the same time period. In both samples, ellipses indicate elapsed time when nothing was recorded or deciphered (usually because of noise).

Summary Observations, September 15, 1988, 12:45-2:15 p.m.

12:45--I arrive at the same time as the first bus and walk in with the student helpers and the children.

The student helpers seem to be able to line up the children more easily than Ms. Brown. I realize that there are three students helpers (today) and only one Ms. Brown! And when in the classroom, Ms. Brown is alone to line them up, etc.

When the children are lined up to walk in, a student helper tells them not to run. As we get close to the door, some begin to run. The student helper walking in the group that I am in says, "Look where they are. Can you go faster?" At this point the children begin to run, with no comment from the student helper.

Mixed messages???
In the coatroom the student helpers assist in taking off coats, hanging them up, etc. Martha wants me to undo her buttons, but I convince her she can do it herself, which she does quite easily.

Researcher effect??

Martha seems to try to "con" people into doing things for her. Ms. Brown volunteered that Martha has an older sibling who was in JK last year. Her Mother was a helper, and when she came in she brought Martha. Martha was treated as someone special, and everyone made a fuss over her.

Four new students today (Russ, Jane, Emily, and Jim) bring the total to 18. The Mother of one of the new students is talking with Ms. Brown, and I hear the Mother say of her child that all she heard about from the child was recess. Ms. Brown explains that recess is snack time.

I have heard other Mothers say that children about to start school talk a lot about recess. Why not explain to the children why they don't have it? Do I ask some children how they feel about not having recess? If I do, that may plant an idea in their heads that wasn't there before. Not a good idea, I think

Kristie wanders around just looking, not playing with anything.....

Shy? Uncertain about what to do?

12:50--I sit by the sand table. Janine and Judy are playing. Judy to Janine, "Do you like French?" Jackie, "Ya." Julie, "I do, I like the songs."
12:55--Bell. Joan is alone at the sand. I ask her what the bell means. She hesitates a moment, then says, "It's snack," and goes to get it from the coatroom. She sits at a far table and drinks juice. I do not try to stop her. Ms. Brown appears not to notice. After a moment, I go and sit with Joan and ask her if she sees any other kids with their snack. She looks around but doesn't answer. About a minute later Ms. Brown (who has told the children to get ready for circle and French) notices Joan and says, "It's not snack time...go and put it away." Joan does this without any comment.

I feel that I set Joan up!! If I hadn't asked the question, I'm sure she wouldn't have thought about snack. However, I wanted to find out if she understood what each bell was for. Joan appears not to be catching on to the rules. Maybe I should watch her more closely, but she doesn't talk much, so it's difficult to know what she is thinking

Kristie wanders by me and I ask her what she would like to do, what her favorite thing is. She points to the climber but doesn't speak. I tell her she can go over there, but she doesn't go.

Perhaps because there are other students on it and she is too shy to push in?

.....
.....1:05--Getting into circle takes some

time because students continue to play. Ms. Brown keeps reminding them to sit in circle. The French teacher (Ms. White) has been waiting in the hall for several minutes.....The children are finally sitting and Ms. Brown and I leave.

1:08-1:20--In the staffroom I ask Ms. Brown about the disciplinary action regarding Mary and Aaron yesterday, but she does not remember any details. I mention how Mary seems to be the only student who asks "why," and I suggest that she doesn't understand the purpose of circle. Ms. Brown says she had explained to the students that circle was required in order to get ready for gym, so there must be another reason for the "why." She offers no other explanation for Mary's behavior. Ms. Brown volunteers that Emily, who lives across the street from Ms. Brown, is a "bit of a terror."

I'm not sure that students see the connection between circle and going to the gym. In fact, they line up at the door to go to gym

1:20--We are back in the classroom. The children are sitting quietly in circle. I sit beside Aaron. Without my asking, Ms. Brown tells the children that Kathy will introduce herself. I say, "Hi, my name is Kathy. Some of you already know me. I'm not a teacher or a Mother's helper. I'm a big person who has never been to junior kindergarten before--just like you. I'll be here for a few weeks to learn all about it. That's why I will make notes about it and use the tape recorder (I hold up my notebook and tape recorder)." They make no comments, and I don't ask them if they have any questions. Ms. Brown sings "Good Afternoon my Friends." Aaron to me, "Where's the playdough?" I tell him that I don't know and that he should ask Ms. Brown. He does, and she replies that it is in the other room. Aaron to Ms. Brown, "Where's my hat? I left it at school." Ms. Brown acknowledges the question, and Judy says, looking to the coatroom, "I see it." Aaron looks as if he is going to go and get it. Ms. Brown tells him he can get it later. Aaron wants to chat some more with me, but I say I think we have to be quiet because the teacher wants to tell us something.

Is this how a student would react??

Ms. Brown has us move to the calendar corner and has us repeat Thursday, September 15, 1988. This is the second time this week for this procedure. There is little participation by the children. The procedure differs slightly from the first time, because there is no hand

clapping and straws are not pinned on the board. Emily (new today) immediately asks, "Can we play now?" Ms. Brown, "Not right now, I want to talk just for a few minutes about some safety rules." She talks about only two at a time on the climber and asks us if we know why there can be only two. ???? suggest we could fall off. Ms. Brown says it's "dangerous." During this time Mary, Marvin, and Alissa are on the climber. Ms. Brown asks them to get off. Marvin and Alissa do but Mary stays on as Ms. Brown continues the discussion about the climber.

What is the message re Mary staying on the climber???

As circle is being dismissed, Ms. Brown pairs four "new" students with four "old" students, asking the old ones to show the new ones things in the room. She asks Aaron to show Jim around. Aaron, "I don't know." Ms. Brown, "Well, show him what you can and ask me if you forget."

I sense that Aaron said, "I don't know" because he doesn't understand what Ms. Brown wanted him to do, not that he doesn't know where things are

Just as circle is breaking up, Aaron asks Ms. Brown, "How do you make the leaves?" (Paper leaves on the bulletin board). Ms. Brown, "I cut them out and pinned them on the board."

Again, I get the feeling that Aaron needs to know how things are done, what will happen next, etc.

1:30--As students disperse for free activities, Aaron and Jim go in different directions and Aaron doesn't show Jim around the room. From what I can see, the others started out as pairs but quickly separated and became involved in their own play. I walk around looking at what everyone is doing. Kristie continues to look lost. Emily announces, "There are four here." (At the water table. Ms. Brown had said there were to be only three.) Ms. Brown, "Well, maybe we can change the rule if everyone is careful."

Message??

Three students are painting at the three available spots. Judy asks Ms. Brown if she can paint. Ms. Brown, "Yes, but you have to wait until there is a free spot." Mary, at the water, "The water is gone." Ms. Brown adds some, and then notices a mess at the sand and kitchen. Water has been brought to the kitchen, there are kitchen toys in the sand, etc. Ms. Brown, "Oh, one more rule about water

in the kitchen--we don't use real water--we have to imagine it." She asks some students to help her clean up the mess and they do.....Jane (new today) wanders around. Ms. Brown to Jane, "Would you like to do something?" Jane, "Color." Ms. Brown gets the materials for Jane.....

1:50--Aaron is at the sand with Marvin and Bob. Heather, at the water, "Water is out again." Ms. Brown replies, "Maybe we'll leave it out." She explains that she will go to Canadian Tire and get a better plug--and, "Anyway, it's almost time for gym." Aaron comes to me, pointing to the sand where several more boys have crowded in, saying, "They won't let me play with them." I say, "Oh" but don't take any action. He returns to the sand and finds a place.

1:55--Aaron comes over to me and I ask him if he knows what this (tape recorder) is. He says he has one but the batteries don't work. Ms. Brown announces tidy-up for circle. ??? repeats, "Tidy-up time, tidy-up time." Aaron continues to sit beside me, and says, "Something is going on here." Me, "What's going on?" His answer is not clear--something about a dog going back in--tomorrow I guess.

I think he saw someone put a toy dog away and decided it could be played with tomorrow. There was no reasonable opportunity to have him explain further

Aaron to me, "I wonder where the playdough is?" Me, "Did Ms. Brown tell you?" Aaron, "In the other room."..... Ms. Brown urges the children to tidy up. Aaron continues to sit beside me and asks me if he can color. I tell him to ask the teacher. He does and she replies, "Not right now, honey--it's time to tidy up and get ready for gym." Me to Aaron, "Do you like gym?" His answer sounds like, "Ya," as he walks over to some toys. Mary comes over to me and asks me to do up her overalls. As I do this, she says, "Do you always--do you always--when you come here?" I figure out that she wants to know if I am going to come to JK every day. I tell her that I will be here every day for three weeks. Emily comes over to me, tells me she brought a snack, and "snuggles" up to me for a moment. Mary leaves. Emily asks me what I'm writing (in my notebook). I explain that because I don't want to forget what to do in JK, I write things down--things like not running, getting ready for snack.

***Emily is the second student (Martha was the first) to

comment on my writing. I realize that I can get their thoughts by asking them to tell me what to remember!!***

I ask Emily (who has been to nursery school) to tell me some things to remember. Emily, "Drink juice." Me, "Thank you, I'll write that down (and I did." She continues with, "play, pick up, cutting and coloring, making things"....Aaron comes over to us and I tell him what we are doing. He volunteers, "House, hands, bus, box farm, kid, box." Before I can ask him to explain what he means, he looks to the climber (no one is on it) and goes to the climber. Emily leaves.

Ms. Brown urges students to tidy up but they appear to be playing with the things they are supposed to put away. For example, Marvin rings the bell on a toy. Ms. Brown asks him if he can think of another way to be helpful. I don't hear his answer, but the bell stops ringing. Students are asked to come to circle. I come to circle.

2:05--Some students are still not in circle. Ms. Brown announces that she will cover her eyes and count to five--then she wants to see everyone sitting in the circle. As she counts, Emily, who is sitting, says to some students on the climber, "Come down, come down where we are." When Ms. Brown opens her eyes, some students are still not in circle and she says, "I think someone didn't hear me--I'll cover my eyes some more." While this is happening, Emily says, "Somebody went, somebody went." (Doug had left the circle.) Ms. Brown opens her eyes, calls Doug back, and coaxes Mary off the climber, saying, "Do you see where the other children are?" Mary slowly comes to circle.

2:10--Students are all sitting. Ms. Brown announces, "I noticed one problem at the sand at playtime today--there's a lot of sand on the floor and that makes a big job for the caretakers."

Do they know what a caretaker is?

Ms. Brown asks the students what to do about the problem. ??? says, "I didn't do it." Ms. Brown, "I'm sure you didn't, but how can we solve the problem?" Judy, "Clean it up." Others, talking at once, offer similar solutions. At this point, Ms. Brown says she has only two ears and can only hear one student at a time. She tells them to hold up their hand if they want to say something. (This is the first time holding up a hand before speaking has been mentioned.) Most of the children hold up their hands and Ms. Brown goes around the circle asking each student

for a comment. When she gets to Judy, she talks about playing with her sister, although the topic is sand. Ms. Brown does not comment.

It seems that getting around the circle took so long that Judy forgot the original question!! I think I might have, too

Doug has left the circle and is playing the piano. Emily wants to go and get him. Ms. Brown, "No. I will." As she brings Doug back, ??? says, "I already said something--that's why I don't want another turn." Students appear very restless. Ms. Brown starts to sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," but some students leave the circle. Ms. Brown says she will close her eyes and give them a chance to get back. Emily starts to count. Ms. Brown, still with eyes closed, asks if she has waited long enough. Some students say no. Ms. Brown continues the song. Students are sitting, but part of the action to the song includes stamping feet (Ms. Brown is sitting in a chair). Most of the children stand up to stamp their feet. Once on their feet, students begin to move around. Ms. Brown asks them to find a spot on the outside of the circle where they are to sit on the orange and brown part of the carpet. Mary says there is no spot for her. Ms. Brown says that if she looks carefully, she (Mary) will find one. Joan is slow to come to circle.

2:15--Ms. Brown announces snack time and tells the class that the quiet ones can go first. She begins to call out names of students who are quiet. Mary, whose name hasn't been called, leaves circle. Ms. Brown calls her back and makes her wait until all the other students have gone.

I watch to see where Mary sits for snack, because I want to ask her why she wouldn't come down from the climber

<u>Tape Transcriptions,</u>
<u>September 15, 1988, 1:55-2:14 p.m.</u>

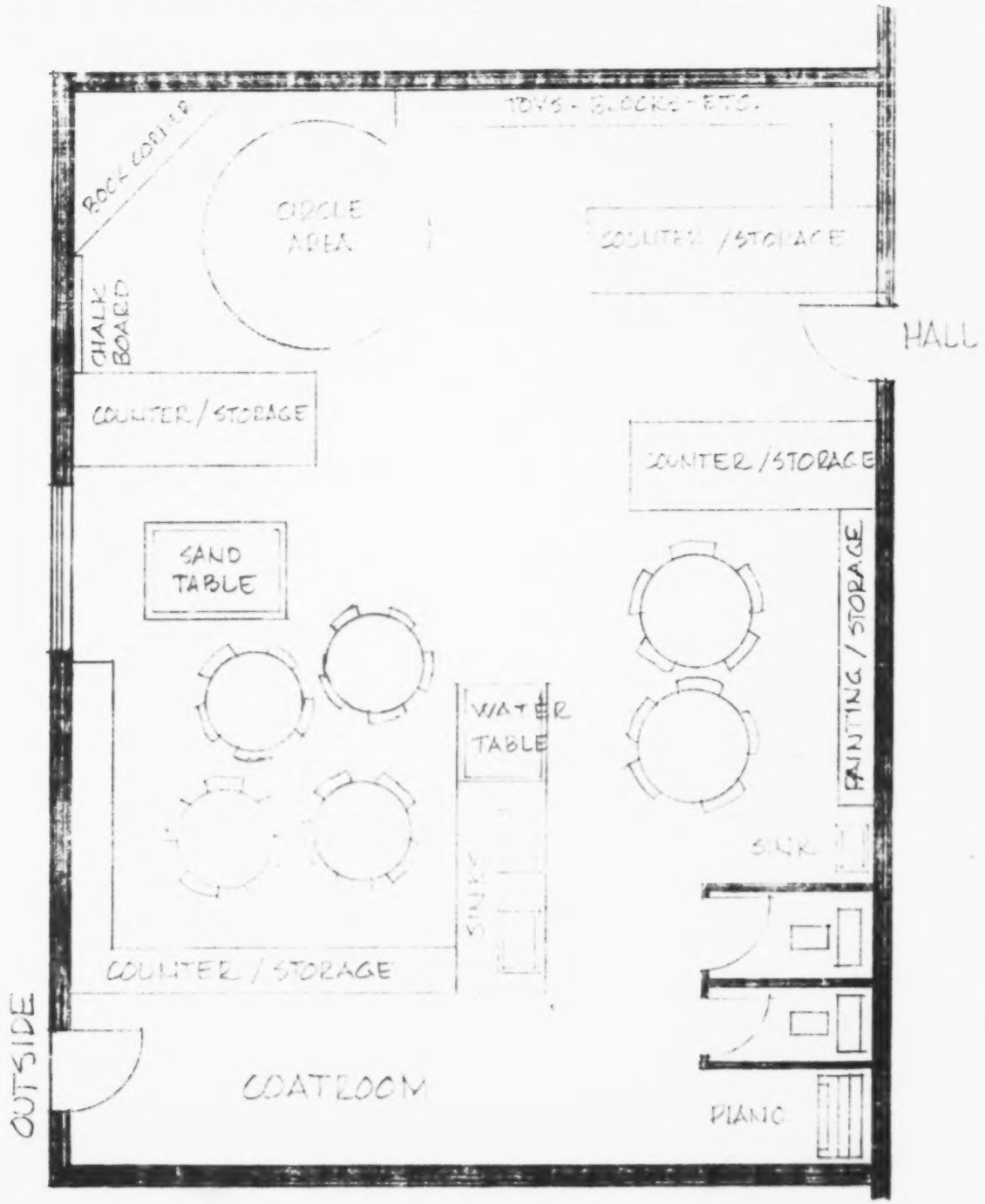
1:55--Me to Aaron: Do you know what this is? It's a tape recorder.
Aaron: I have one of them...out of batteries.
Ms. Brown: Marvin, time to tidy up.
Several students: Tidy-up time, tidy-up time.....
Aaron: What's going on here...put the dog back in...tomorrow I guess.
Me: What are you going to do tomorrow?

Aaron: I wonder where the playdough is?
Me: Did you ask Ms. Brown?
Aaron: It's in the other room.
.....
.....Aaron: I'm going to ask Ms. Brown if I can color---can I color?
Ms. Brown: Not right now...then we're going to the gym.
Me to Aaron: Do you like gym?
Aaron: Ya.....
Mary: ...do up my overalls.
Me: Sure.
Mary:....do you have a box?
Me: I have a bag for my snack.
Mary: ...do you always...when you come here?.....
Emily: I have my snack.
.....
.....
.....Ms. Brown: I'm going to close my eyes and count...see if you can keep sitting nicely in circle by the time I get to five...1-2-3-4-5...Oh, I think some boys didn't hear me...before I open my eyes again come and sit down.
Emily: Come down, come down, where we are.....somebody went, somebody went.....
2:10--Ms. Brown: There's one problem I noticed at playtime today.....a lot of sand on the floor.
???: I didn't do that.
Ms. Brown: I'm sure it was an accident.
??? (different from before): I didn't throw sand on the floor.....
.....(Students talking at once about how to keep sand off the floor).....
Ms. Brown: I have only two ears and I can only hear one person...try to remember to put your hand up when you want to say something.
???: My hand's up.
Ms. Brown: You had your hand up, but you forgot one thing--wait...(Doug is playing the piano)...until I say yes children... (Doug is still at the piano)....I'm sorry, I can only see hands of children that are sitting in circle...if someone is behind me I can't see if their hand is up and they'll never get a chance to talk...Doug, come here.
Emily: I'll go and get him.
Ms. Brown: No, that's fine, Emily.
???:...that's why I don't want to have another turn.
Ms. Brown singing "If You're Happy and You Know It.".....???: .....those kids up there

Ms. Brown: These children were not listening nicely--I'm going to give them one chance while I close my eyes for them to go back and find their spot.
Emily: ...don't open them yet.
Ms. Brown: Is it long enough?
???: No.
Ms. Brown singing: .....listen to this song.....quickly, if you can find a spot on the outside of the circle.....outside.....quickly.....have to be touching the orange and brown parts....Jack...Emily...Jack...Martha...hands should touch the orange and brown parts.
Emily: ???
Ms. Brown: Not right now--pretty soon, sit down first...Emily...Emily....Mary and Joan, we're waiting for you...come quickly.....
Mary: There's not a spot for me.
2:15--Ms. Brown: Oh, I think you can find a spot if you look carefully.

APPENDIX B

JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM (not to scale)



CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name Kathleen Margaret Amunds.

Place and year of birth

Medicine Hat, Alberta, February 28, 1935.

EDUCATION

1986-1989 Queen's University, Master in Education.

1960-1964 University of Calgary, Bachelor of Education.

EXPERIENCE

1964-1966 Secondary School Teacher, Calgary, Alberta.

1966-1967 Secondary School Teacher, Pembroke, Ontario.

1967-1973 Secondary School Teacher
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